skins and was about sixteen feet in diameter. The lower 342
edge of the lodge proper was fastened, by wooden pegs, to
within an inch or two of the ground. Inside, a lining, made
of brightly painted cowskin, reached from the ground to a
height of five or six feet. An air space of the thickness of the
lodge poles — two or three inches — was thus left between
the lining and the lodge covering, and the cold air, rushing
up through it from the outside, made a draft, which aided
the ears in freeing the lodge of smoke. The door was three
or four feet high and was covered by a flap of skin, which
hung down on the outside. Thus made, with plenty of
buffalo robes for seats and bedding, and a good stock of
firewood, a lodge was very comfortable, even in the coldest
weather.

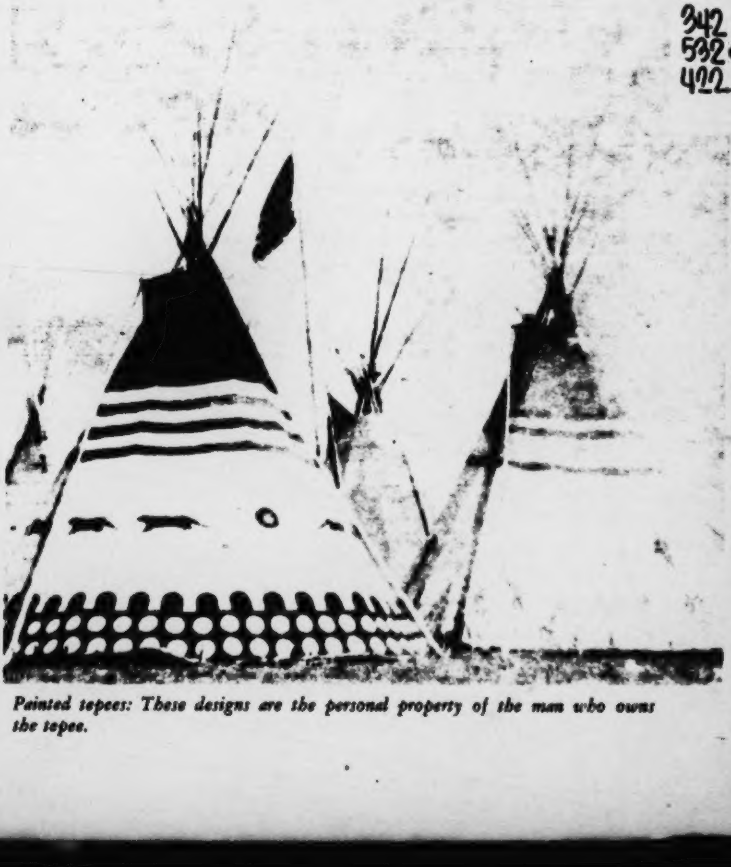
It was not uncommon to decorate the outside of the [532]
lodge with buffalo tails and brightly painted pictures of [237]
animals. Inside, the space around was partitioned off into
couches, or seats, each about six feet in length. At the foot 353
and head of every couch, a mat, made of straight, peeled willow [352]
twigs, fastened side by side, was suspended on a tripod at
an angle of forty-five degrees, so that between the couches
spaces were left like an inverted V, thus Λ, making convenient
places to store articles which were not in use. The [554]
owner of the lodge always occupied the seat or couch at the
back of the lodge, directly opposite the door-way, the places
on his right being occupied by his wives and daughters;
though sometimes a Blackfoot had so many wives that they
occupied the whole lodge. The places on his left were reserved [576]
for his sons and visitors. When a visitor entered a [554]
lodge, he was assigned a seat according to his rank, — the
nearer to the host, the greater the honor.

Bows were generally made of ash wood, which grows east 411
of the mountains toward the Sand Hills. When for any 824
reason they could not obtain ash, they used the wood of
the choke-cherry tree, but this had not strength nor spring

posed by the occasion, the time available, and by the particular people with whom he interacted. 177 [554]

His tie with the past was real. His father, in his youth, had hunted buffalo, fought the Cree and the Flathead, and raided the Crow camps for horses. His father had been fully conversant with Indian lore and religion, and even though a baptized Christian had remained a participant in the old culture. Buffalo Heart, himself, had lived through three-quarters of a century of radical change, a period during which new subsistence patterns were required and the problems a man was called upon to solve were concerned less and less with game and other Indians and more and more with dealing with the white man and his technology and beliefs. Buffalo Heart had tried subsistence farming, then ranching, and finally he had turned to day labor. He had seen a few Indians succeed in these endeavors, 177 434

342
532
422



Painted tepees: These designs are the personal property of the man who owns the tepee.

woolens for winter wear, the buffalo robe remained their com- 291
mon cold-weather outer garment. Their finest shirts, leggings,
and dresses were of antelope or mountain sheep skins. Deer and 297
elk skins were more serviceable for daily wear. Many garments 291
were painted with earth pigments, in solid colors or in simple
designs.[40] 531

In summer the Blackfeet lived in large tribal camps to defend 221
themselves better against their enemies. They hunted buffalo on
horseback with bow and arrow. As winter approached, they 224
separated into bands of ten to twenty lodges, to make buffalo
pounds and to take wolves and foxes for the trade. The Piegans 224
living in the broken country near the mountains lured buffalo herds over high precipices along river valleys instead of bothering to make traditional pounds with fenced corrals. If the animals were not killed or entirely disabled by their fall, they were so badly bruised and shaken up that they were easily dispatched by hunters waiting with bows and arrows at the cliff base. It was not necessary to expend valuable powder and ball in this operation. So successful were Blackfoot buffalo hunters that they could furnish supplies of meat and pemmican to the traders and still accumulate surpluses to provide the Indians with food during the lean winter months.[41]

Blackfoot Indian homes were clean tipis covered with dressed 342
buffalo skins. Some of the covers were painted with rude repre- [532] ●
sentations of buffalo, bear, and other animals and birds.[42]

The Piegans—if not the other tribes also—then had a civil chief
and a war chief. The former was renowned for his eloquence, 622
the latter for his success in leading large war parties. Both held 701
limited authority. They, as well as the chiefs of hunting bands, were leaders only by the consent and will of their people. They "had no power beyond their influence, which would immediately cease by any act of authority and they are all very careful not to arrogate any superiority over others."[43]

---

[40] Thompson, *Narrative*, 349–51; Henry and Thompson, *New Light*, 525–26, 725–26.

[41] Henry and Thompson, *New Light*, II, 530, 723–25.

[42] *Ibid.*, II, 527.

[43] Thompson, *Narrative*, 346–47, 364–65.

[ca. 1850]

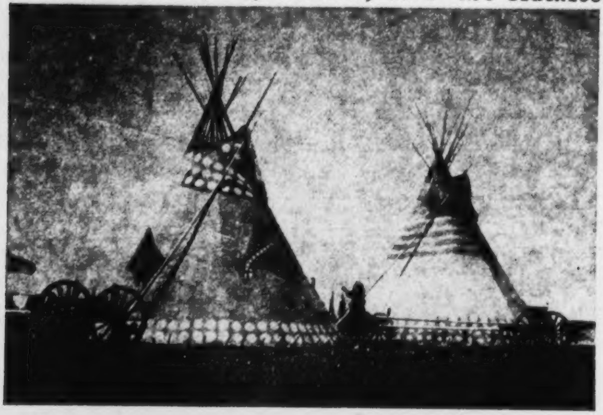
6: Artists and Craftsmen

IN THE MIDDLE of the nineteenth century, Blackfoot men and 531
women evidenced their handicraft skills in the making and decorating of a variety of useful articles. 532 Some of their crafts differed little from those of their stone-age ancestors. Others made effective use of the sharp metal tools, cloth, glass beads, and other items received from the fur traders. Yet, even when they employed European-made materials, they produced handiwork such as was never known to Europe, reflecting the ingenuity and good taste of its Indian makers.

The trade in buffalo robes encouraged greater production in 281 a craft that was old long before white men appeared in the Blackfoot country—that of skin dressing. [177] The women who dressed buffalo robes for market played an even more important role in the fur trade than did their husbands who killed the buffalo. Theirs was harder work than buffalo hunting. Twenty-five to thirty robes a winter were about as many as an industrious woman could prepare. A good buffalo hunter could keep several wives supplied with all the hides they could process. Women who excelled at skin dressing were proud of both the quantity and the quality of their output. Older women bragged of the number of robes they had dressed for market and the number of lodge covers they had made. Girls were taught that skill in [581] dressing skins was a desirable attribute in the eyes of a prospective husband.

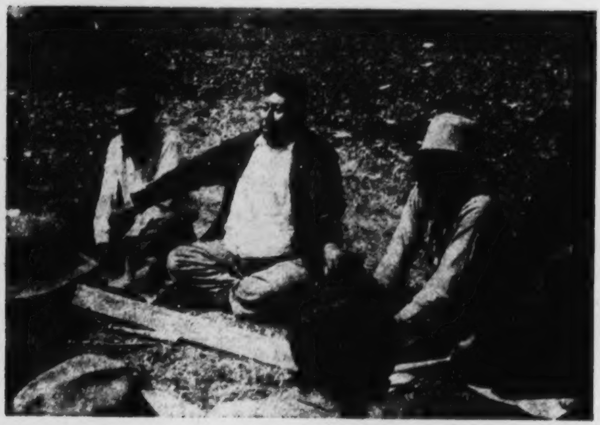
Dressing a buffalo hide involved a series of processes that can

342
532



Painted lodges in the sun dance encampment near Browning, Montana (1942).

524



Stick game in progress at sun dance encampment near Heart Butte (1944).

BOTH COURTESY MUSEUM OF THE PLAINS INDIAN

[facing p. 110]

283 ing it into two ropes, each two fingers wide. She trimmed each rope carefully to make it an even width throughout its length. Any short pieces trimmed off were saved for whip lashes. After trimming, she oiled the ropes with back fat. A single bull hide provided two ropes, each about seventeen feet long. This rope was used for lariats, hackamores, bridles (single strand or plaited), picket lines, hobbles, saddle-rigging straps, stirrup straps, travois ropes, and cords for wrapping bundles and tying them to travois or pack saddles.

281 391 A buffalo hide to be used for covering a frame saddle was first soaked in a pond or stream for several days until it became green and foul smelling. It was then stretched on the ground, hair side up. Boiling water was thrown on it, and the hair was taken off with a rock. The saddlemaker then turned the hide over and scraped the flesh from the underside with a hide scraper. She then stretched the hide over the saddle frame, fitted it, cut it, and sewed it in place with rawhide cord. She took her stitches on the underside of the saddle, where they would not show when the saddle was in use. To prevent the wooden frame from warping as the rawhide dried and shrunk, she tied the saddle over a log about the width of a horse's back or forced an old rolled-up lodge cover between the side bars and wrapped a rawhide cord around saddle and cover to hold them in place until the saddle cover dried.

281 415 Of the several types of containers made from single pieces of rawhide—folded, and laced or tied with thongs—the most common was the parfleche. When folded like an envelope, the Blackfoot parfleche was a rectangle about two feet long and fifteen inches wide. Women made them in pairs, one parfleche for each side of a pack horse. A large buffalo hide would yield material for both cases. The craftswoman first soaked the rawhide, with the hair on it, in water, then she pegged it out on the ground, hair side down. She measured the outlines of the cases on the
[532] hide with peeled willow sticks. While the hide was still damp, she painted simple geometric designs on the end and side flaps

which would show when the cases were in use. She did not bother 281
to paint the backs, which would be hidden from view.

She used willow sticks for rulers in laying out the decorative 415
fields, and as straight edges in painting the outlines of the geo- 532
metric designs. She first outlined all the painted forms in a single
color. Then she filled in the larger areas of the composition with
the desired colors. Some women mixed their paints with hot [386]
water, which caused them to sink into the damp hide and be-
come permanently fixed after the hide dried. Others applied to [381]
all the painted areas an overcoat of sticky glue, made by boiling
the tail of a beaver or the clean, second-scrapings of buffalo hides.
This thin coat of sizing gave the colors a glossy appearance.

After the paint dried, the craftswoman turned the rawhide over and removed the hair with a hide-scraper or a rock. Pounding the opposite side with a rock whitened the unpainted portions of the rawhide and made the colors stand out from the background. Finally, the woman cut the parfleches to their desired shapes with a sharp knife, folded them into envelope form, and burned the tie holes with a heated iron rod. The parfleches were finished.

Areas of rawhide remaining after the parfleches were cut out 281
were not wasted. They were used for smaller containers or for 415
resoles in repairing moccasins. Women made other rawhide cases
in rectangular or cylindrical form and painted them. Those intended to hold sacred objects were decorated with long, cut-rawhide fringes.

Men made shields and drums of rawhide. To make a shield, 281
the thick hide of a buffalo bull's neck was placed over a fire in
the ground so that it would shrink and become still thicker and
tougher. It was trimmed into a circular form about eighteen
inches in diameter. Men painted on their shields sacred symbols [532]
such as buffalo, the sun, the moon, and stars, which they believed [751]
would protect them from their enemies' bullets and arrows. The
belly hide of a horse was preferred for drumheads. It would not 281
soften or stretch out of shape. To tighten a drumhead, they held 534
it near a fire. Paintings on drums were also of sacred character. [532]

● 532 Blackfoot painters used both native and trade pigments. Their
386 own colors were mostly mineral ones. Several reds were obtained from colored earths or crushed rock. By baking a gray or yellowish clay over ashes, they obtained a reddish brown. The spring buds of pussy willows provided another red. Yellow was a colored earth commonly found in the valley of the Yellowstone River. Buffalo gallstones furnished another yellow. White was an earth, and black was either earth or charcoal. Although the Blackfeet knew how to obtain a blue from dried duck dung and a green from plants growing near lakes, they preferred the blue and green from the trading posts.

Pigments were ground to a powder in small stone mortars, stored in little buckskin sacks, and mixed with hot water or glue extracted from boiled beaver tail or the underscrapings of a hide.
532 Paint brushes were pieces of porous bone cut from the edge of
413 a buffalo shoulder blade or hipbone. Their honeycomb composition held the paint and permitted it to flow smoothly onto the surface of rawhide or soft skin. Outlines were drawn with sharp-pointed brushes. Colors were spread over larger areas with the sides of the same brushes or with rounded-edged ones. A separate brush was used for each color.

462 As a general rule women painted only geometric designs on
532 rawhide cases, buffalo robes, and lodge linings. Men painted human or animal forms on their shields, drums, and lodge covers, and they recorded their successes at war on the inner surfaces of their buffalo robes.

532 The largest and most striking examples of Blackfoot Indian
342 painting were the larger than life-size representations of animals and birds depicted on the outer surfaces of their conical lodge covers. These primitive mural paintings portrayed the creatures which the tipi owners regarded as the sources of their super-
[787] natural powers. Each was painted in strict accordance with the instructions the owner received in the vision or dream in which he obtained his power. The lodge owner called upon a man who was known to be a skilled painter. He told the artist what creatures to portray and where to locate them on the cover. The

painter drew the outlines of the figures in black or dark brown 532
while the lodge was standing. Then the cover was spread out on
the ground and less skilled artists assisted the painter in filling 342
in the outlines with colors designated by the owner. A buffalo tail or handful of buffalo hair was used to apply the color to the larger areas, and the paint, mixed with hot water, was rubbed onto the cover with considerable pressure.

Usually a single pair of the larger mammals, such as buffalo, deer, or elk, representing the mythical giver and his mate, appeared on a cover. If the subjects were smaller mammals, such as beaver or otter, several pairs were represented. A device symbolizing the home of the creature usually was painted on the back of the cover. The animal or bird figures faced the doorway, one or more on each side of the lodge. Usually the bodies of the figures were of one solid color—black, red, or yellow. On many of these animals the throat, heart, and kidneys were painted in contrasting colors. It was important to show them because they were regarded as the sources of the creature's power.

Most painted lodges also had two areas of geometric design. A banded area at the bottom, usually in red, represented the earth, while unpainted discs within this field symbolized fallen stars. The second area, at the top, was painted black, representing the night sky. Unpainted discs within this area indicated the constellations of the Great Bear and the Pleiades. Near the top and at the back of the cover a Maltese cross representing the morning star or butterfly was painted. It was thought to bring powerful dreams to the tipi owner.

Only a small proportion of the Blackfoot lodge covers bore
these colorful, decorative paintings. However, the making of the 342
cover itself was no mean achievement. From six to twenty buffalo
cow hides were needed, the number depending upon the rela- 281
tive wealth of the lodge owner and the size of his family. An elderly woman experienced in cutting and piecing together hides laid them out on the ground and told her assistants where to
cut and sew them together with sinew thread. At the end of [476]
this sewing bee the lodge owner feasted the women who took part in this work.

[ca. 1850]

342 part in this work. Lodge covers were replaced at least every
281 other year. Rather than discard its old cover a wealthy family
might give it to a poor woman who would cut several feet off
the bottom and convert it into a tipi for her family.

322 In the fall of the year women cut new tipi poles of lodgepole
pine. After a woman had brought her poles into camp she made
berry soup and invited young men who wished to help peel these
poles to a feast. To remove the bark from a pole, a man secured
a stick on the sharp end of his knife, grasped the stick with one
hand and the knife handle with the other, and employed the
knife as a draw shave.

● 532 Women painted geometric designs on the buffalo-skin draft
353 screens which lined the lower portions of their conical lodges.
The distinctive decoration on Blackfoot linings consisted of a
narrow horizontal band near the top with broader bands extending downward at intervals of about fifteen inches.

513 Blackfoot Indian beds were simply made of dried grass or
rawhide spread on the ground and covered with buffalo robes.
Women displayed their craftsmanship in making and decorating
the backrests set up at the head and foot of each bed. Some
125 or more peeled willow rods were tied together with sinew
cord one above the other to form a flexible, comfortable, A-
513 shaped seat back. The backrest was usually edged with red or
531 blue trade cloth, and a flap of the same material tastefully decorated with porcupine quills or beadwork was suspended from
the top. A pole tripod supported the backrest, and these poles,
too, might be decorated by peeling off sections of bark in geometric patterns with a sharp knife and filling in the peeled areas
with paint. It is doubtful that these picturesque house furnishings were known in prehistoric times.

291 Even though trade cloth was much used in Blackfoot clothing
in the mid-nineteenth century, traditional styles of basic garments persisted. Some men did wear hooded coats made from
Hudson's Bay blankets, copied from those worn by French-Canadian fur traders. And some members of both sexes preferred the trade blanket to the buffalo robe for their cold-weather

[ca. 1850]

outergarments. But buffalo robes were by no means passé. Some 291
of these robes were decorated on their skin surfaces with series
of horizontal parallel bands in painting or porcupine quillwork. 291
The Indians called these "real decorated robes," suggesting that 532
the decorative pattern was an old one. Successful warriors pre-
ferred to illustrate their deeds of valor with crude, stick-like fig- [531]
ures of horses captured and men fighting painted on their buf-
falo robes.

A man usually wore his buffalo robe or blanket wrapped 291
around his body, with his left shoulder covered and his right
arm and shoulder uncovered. He held the garment in place by grasping the two ends with his left hand underneath the robe. In very cold weather or when courting, a man pulled this garment over his head like a shawl and kept both arms covered. Women generally belted their blankets or robes about their waists, allowing the upper part to fall free when they needed to use both hands in their work.

For daily wear, men dressed in calico or flannel shirts, blue [292]
cloth breechclouts, and cloth leggings, but their finest dress
clothing was of skins. Women lavished much time and care upon
making and decorating their husband's dress clothes. The finest 292
shirts and leggings were of antelope or bighorn skin. Two animal 294
skins were needed to make the sleeved shirt, which was put on over the head. One skin formed the front of the garment, the other the back, and the legs of the animals hung down as trailers at the sides. Usually a narrow flap of red flannel bordered the neck opening. Over the center of the chest was sewed a large rosette or rectangle of skin, covered with quillwork or beadwork. Over both shoulders and down both sleeves (covering the seams) were narrow bands of quill or bead embroidery about three fingers (two inches) wide.

Leggings made of the same material as the shirt extended from ankle to hipbone, where they were tied to a narrow rawhide belt in a common knot. The leggings of this period fitted the form of the leg rather tightly. The vertical seam on the outside of the leg was covered with a beaded or quilled band

[ca. 1850]

292 to match those on the shirt. The most elaborate outfits were deco-
rated with hairlock or weasel-skin pendants from the neck, and
294 sleeves. Sixteen or more weasel skins were required to decorate
[237] both shirt and leggings. Worth three or more horses, such suits
were generally the property of rich men.

● 532 Some men painted black or dark brown horizontal stripes on
their shirts and leggings if they were instructed to do so in their
292 dreams. Indeed, many of the finest suits were made in fulfill-
[787] ment of dream instructions. They were regarded as personal
medicines endowing their owners with supernatural power and
[778] were worn only in battle, in ceremonies, in dress parades, and
to be buried in.

292 The handsome eagle-feather bonnets worn by a few Blackfoot leaders were reserved for the same occasions. These were not of the familiar flowing type made by the Sioux, but were crowns of eighteen to thirty upright feathers inserted in a folded rawhide headband. The headband was covered with red flannel and decorated with little brass discs and pendants of white weasel skin.

291 The woman's basic garment was a long, sleeveless dress reach-
ing almost to the ankles. Ceremonial dresses differed from every-
[292] day ones primarily in their elaborate decoration. Some dresses
were made of calico, some of heavy blue trade cloth, but the
292 finest were of antelope or elkskin. One skin formed the front and
one the back of the garment. They were sewed together at the
292 sides, and both were sewed to a yoke of the same material which
294 covered the shoulders and upper arms. A handsome dress, col-
lected by John James Audubon in 1843, has a narrow band of
trade beads bordering the neck opening, broader bands over the
shoulders, and a still broader meandering band below the border
[237] of the yoke on both front and back. A row of elktooth pendants
hangs from the broadest band of beadwork.[1] Some wives of
wealthy men wore four rows of elkteeth on both front and back
of their best dresses.

---

[1] Specimen in Audubon Collection, American Museum of Natural History, New York City.

[ca. 1850]

the taboos associated with the care of the bundle. Most bundles 784
had to be hung on tripods behind the owner's lodge during the
day and brought inside at night. Other taboos were more varied. 778
The owner of a medicine pipe bundle must not let anyone pass
in front of him when camp was moved. A beaver bundle owner
dared not show fear of water in any form. The owner of a snake-painted tipi must not break a bone in his lodge.

Frequent transfer of medicine bundles was encouraged by the 778
Blackfoot belief that having owned important bundles added to
a man's prestige and social position. Men of distinction were 554
proud to recount the various bundles they had possessed during
their lifetime, just as they were proud to tell of their brave deeds
in war. Everyone knew that purchase of an important bundle
required sacrifice of considerable property and that learning the
ritual of the bundle was an intellectual accomplishment.

Many articles associated with successful achievements in war 778
came to be regarded as medicine bundles. Among them were
headdresses, shirts, shields, knives, and lances. These more important 714
war medicines were usually the property of the well-to-do members of the tribe.[1]

The most common of the more important classes of medicine 778
bundles were the painted lodges. There were more than fifty of
them among the three Blackfoot tribes. The handsomely painted 532
lodge cover was not a sacred entity in itself. Rather it was part 342
of a complex of sacred objects received by its original owner in
his dream of power.

According to Piegan tradition some of the oldest painted
lodges are the bear ones. Their origin is explained in the following 539
legend: Long ago a young Piegan determined to obtain some 778
secret power which would bring him success in war. While traveling
through heavy timber in search of a fasting place, he came 532
upon a cave. He entered it. When his eyes became accustomed 342
to the darkness he saw the cave was occupied by a mother bear 773
and her cubs. When he pleaded with the bear mother not to
harm him, she quieted down and even let him fondle her cubs.

---

[1] War medicines are described on pages 127–28 of this book.

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

[ca. 1850]

539 For four days and nights he stayed in the bear's den without
778 food or water. Meanwhile he prayed to the bear to give him of
its power.

532 On the fourth night he fell asleep. In his dream a male and
342 female bear appeared. They took pity upon him. The female
773 bear gave him her home, a handsome lodge with three red bears
painted on each side and red circles on the front and back representing the bears' den. The doorway was covered with a bearskin. She also gave him incense to be burned in the lodge day and night, a blackstone pipe bowl carved in the shape of a bear, and a song, "Underneath there is a bear which is very powerful. With her protection I shall always be spared in battle."

Then the male bear spoke. "My son, I give you my lodge too." Two black bears standing on their hind legs were painted on this lodge, one at each side of the entrance. The father bear also gave him a pipe and a drum.

Then the mother bear gave him a knife with a bear-jaw handle. She threw the knife at him, and he grabbed it before it could harm him. The bears gave him a song to go with it. "A knife is just like dirt thrown against me."

The bears then drove their children back into the brush and painted themselves. They painted their faces red and made long vertical stripes on their faces by scratching off the paint with their claws.

They told him, "This is how you should paint for battle. This painting will protect you."

When enemies of the bears came through the brush and attacked them, the male bear charged and killed the attackers. Then he told the boy, "See. That is the way. Always charge in battle as I just did."

The next day the young man left the bears' den. Not long afterward he joined a war party. In battle he carried a bear knife, painted himself, and charged as the bears had taught him. He took several scalps, but was himself unharmed. After he returned home, he made the two bear lodges just as the bears had shown them to him in his dream.[3]

[ca. 1850]

The bear knife became a coveted Blackfoot war medicine. It had a sharp double-edged iron blade. Bear jaws and feathers were bound to its wood or bone handle. There were more than a half-dozen bear knives among the three Blackfoot tribes. In 1847, the missionary Father Nicholas Point met a Frenchman who had lost all his horses in a fight with the Blackfeet. But he was proud to have captured "a bear knife, which is for the Indians what a floating flag is for civilized man."[3] 714 778

Only a very brave man dared to purchase a bear knife from its owner because the transfer ceremony was a dangerous ordeal. After they had purified themselves in a sweat lodge, the man who wished to acquire the bear knife and the owner entered the latter's lodge naked. A bed of thorns was in the lodge. The owner made a smudge of parsnip roots, donned a bearclaw necklace, sang his bear songs, and imitated a bear pawing the ground. Then he jumped upon the petitioner, pushed him on to the bed of thorns and painted him in the bear manner. 714 778 796 425

After that he said, "Now, I shall give you the bear knife. If you don't take it, I shall keep it. If you get hurt with it, don't blame me."

He crawled four times around the lodge interior growling like a bear. Then, holding the knife by the end of its sharp blade, he hurled it at the initiate. If the latter caught it, he became the new owner and the former owner congratulated him. "You gave your life for that knife. It will make you powerful."

The daddy of all Blackfoot medicine bundles was the beaver bundle. Indian traditions refer to the beaver bundle as the oldest type of medicine bundle. It was by far the largest. Owners of beaver bundles, known as beaver men or "those who have power over the waters," were the tribal calendar keepers. With sticks in their bundles they kept count of the passage of the months 778 778 805

---

[2] This origin legend^ was told me by Fish Wolf Robe, a Piegan, at the time I negotiated the purchase of a bear-painted lodge for the Museum of the Plains Indian.

[3] Nicholas Point, "A Journey on a Barge on the Missouri River from the Fort of the Blackfeet [Lewis] to that of the Assiniboin [Union], 1847," *Mid-America*, Vol. XIII, 247.

[115] [126] [539] [778] [532] [342] [773]

^ [i.e., the origin legend of the bear painted lodges--Analyst]

796 was a crude skin doll containing tobacco seeds and a weasel skin
stuffed with human hair. A flint arrowpoint hung from the doll's
778 head. The Blackfoot Indians believed this peculiar bonnet and
292 the elk garments had been given to a beaver medicine man long
ago by a bull elk. The elk, in turn, had received them as presents
796 from another elk who had run off with his wife. The primary
costume accessory was a sacred digging stick similar in form to
778 the ones commonly used by Blackfoot women for unearthing
293 prairie turnips. Another legend tells of the origin of this religious
symbol. A woman married the Morning Star and went to
live with him in the lodge of his father, the Sun. One day the
woman used this tool to uproot a sacred turnip. She looked down
through the turnip hole, saw her own people on earth, and became
homesick. Morning Star then permitted her to descend to
earth through the turnip hole.

796 One by one the long series of songs recited the mythological
origin of each object in the bundle. After the medicine woman
[778] was outfitted, her husband's body and face were painted black
[533] with charcoal, a half-moon was painted on his breast and a circular
[302] sun on his back, and lines representing sun dogs were made
on his cheeks, chin, and forehead.

796 During this ceremony in the medicine woman's lodge an altar
was constructed near the lodge door by stripping off the sod in
778 an area about three feet square, covering it with a thin layer
532 of light-colored earth, and executing a symbolic dry-color painting
on this prepared surface. A central circle (Sun) was flanked
by representations of two sun dogs (Sun's face painting), a crescent
moon (Sun's wife), and a disc (Morning Star, their son).
Before the medicine woman's party left her lodge, this altar was
destroyed, symbolizing the obliteration of the scar on the face
[773] of the legendary Blackfoot hero, Scar Face. In the Scar Face
myth his face was healed during his visit to the Sun.[10]

---

[10] The fact that three legends—the Beaver Medicine, the Woman Who Married a Star, and Scar Face—are required for the symbolism of the Sun Dance is further indication of the composite character of this ritual. Clark Wissler, "The Sun Dance of the Blackfoot Indians," American Museum of Natural History *Anthropological Papers*, Vol. XVI, Part 3.

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

[ca. 1880-1900]

to lose interest in porcupine quillwork. Very few girls bothered 531
to learn the quillworker's craft. 178

Other traditional crafts were becoming decadent for other
reasons. Government issue of cheap tin plates, cups, knives, and 237
forks made it unnecessary for the Indians to fashion wooden
bowls or horn cups and spoons. The issuance of strong, white 178
men's stock saddles rendered the more picturesque but weaker [322]
Indian-made saddles obsolete. The solid-colored trade blanket [321]
replaced the buffalo robe both as an outer garment and as a bed [415]
covering. Not until collectors of ethnological specimens began
to encourage veterans of the intertribal wars to record their [492]
war deeds on skins (in the 1890's) was there a slight revival of [291]
the decadent old art of robe painting. However, owners of
painted lodges readily transferred their religious symbols from 178
worn buffalo-skin tipi covers to new canvas ones. 532

For a few years after the buffalo were gone, restless young
men continued to raise small war parties to raid enemy camps 721
in quest of horses. In 1881–82 a serious mange epidemic killed
many Piegan-owned horses. Agent Young estimated that "about 231
half of the horses these Indians owned died."[4] Young men, set
afoot as a result of this plague, redoubled their efforts to obtain 721
mounts in traditional forays against the Crows, Crees, and Assiniboins. But times had changed for horse raiders also. They had to leave home secretly at night to avoid being caught and detained by their own Indian Police. On their outward journeys they could find little to eat. Sometimes they went without food for days. Sometimes they begged some food from the ranch houses of white cattlemen. They were lucky indeed if they could kill an antelope or a few rabbits. If they did reach an enemy camp and run off some horses, they risked being overtaken on their way home by troops from Fort Shaw or Fort Assiniboine and having their stolen horses taken from them. Even after they reached home, the horses might be confiscated by the Indian Police.

The "medicine line" continued to serve as a convenient escape 727

---

[4] Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1882, 100.

128 Schaeffer, curator of the Museum of the Plains Indian since 1947, for
checking a number of specific points with Piegan informants as ques-
127 tions arose during the writing of this work. Dr. Schaeffer also made
available to me manuscript materials in the Blackfeet Agency
Archives, now in the Museum of the Plains Indian.

532 Most of the text figures reproduced in this study are based on
126 pencil drawings carefully prepared by Calvin Boy, a young Piegan
artist. To insure their accuracy, special precautions were taken. As
elderly informants described objects and/or activities I desired to
have illustrated Reuben Black Boy and I made rough sketches. We
showed these to Calvin Boy and explained to him the content of the
desired illustrations. He then drew pictures at a very large scale so
that they could be seen readily by elderly informants, many of whom
had poor eyesight. The informants examined the drawings and in
the presence of the artist made suggestions for any changes in detail
that might be necessary. Then Calvin Boy prepared the final pencil
or pen-and-ink drawings. The minority of the line illustrations were
prepared by the author from his field notes and sketches.

127 I am indebted to the following institutions for permission to reproduce photographs of objects and scenes in this bulletin: American Museum of Natural History, New York; Brooklyn Museum; Chicago Museum of Natural History; Glacier Studio, Browning, Mont.; Great Northern Railway; Montana Historical Society, Helena; Museum of the Plains Indian; Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology; Smithsonian Institution; and Geological Survey, United States Department of the Interior.

121 Throughout the period of this investigation (1941–52) I was mind-
ful of its broader implications. I endeavored to read widely in the
scattered and largely unindexed literature on the Blackfoot and other
127 horse-using tribes of the Great Plains and Plateau. In quest of dated
materials and comparative data, I examined numerous collections of
specimens in museums as well as collections of early drawings, paint-
114 ings, and photographs. I sought to obtain comparative data directly
from elderly informants among the Flathead (1947), Oglala Dakota
(1947), and Kiowa (1949) tribes as my limited opportunities for field
127 work on their respective reservations permitted. Alice Marriott
graciously supplied, through correspondence, information on Kiowa
horse usages, obtained in the course of her own field work. Eugene
Barrett, forester, Rosebud Reservation, S. Dak., kindly furnished some
comparative data on Brule Dakota horse usages. Edith V. A. Murphy
of Covelo, Calif., formerly field botanist, Office of Indian Affairs, sent
me valuable comparative data on horse medicines.

121 In this study I approached the larger problem of the definition, origin, and history of the Plains Indian horse complex through an

ing. A more lively animal was close-hobbled so that it had to jump 231
to move around. The hobble generally was simply constructed of a
length of soft-tanned buffalo skin or rawhide. Weasel Tail demon- [283]
strated a clever hobble that would neither tighten nor slip (fig. 2). As

231
284
532

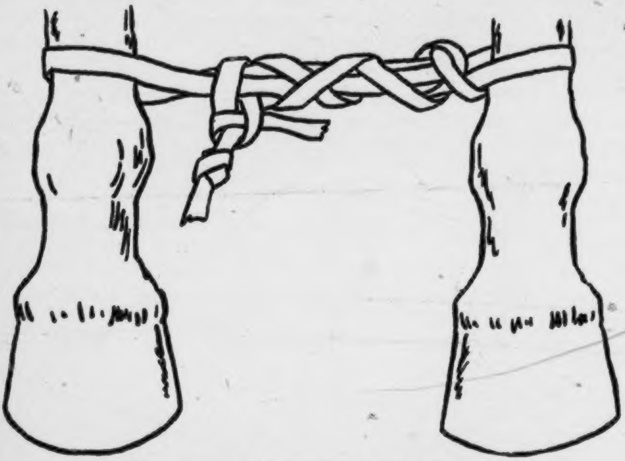


FIGURE 2.—A simple rawhide hobble, Blackfoot.

a rule hobbles were fastened loose enough to prevent chafing of the 231
horse's legs but tight enough to prevent their slipping over the feet.
In lieu of a second hobble, hunting parties sometimes tied a second
horse to the leg of a hobbled animal.[12]

PICKETING

Wissler (1910, p. 97) wrote of the Blackfoot, "At night the best horses were brought into camp and picketed near the tipis of their owners." This was a precautionary measure to prevent the theft

---

[12] In 1754, Hendry (1907, p. 338) noted that the horses of the "Archithinue" of the Saskatchewan Plains were "turned out to grass, their legs being fettered." The Osage, on their summer hunt in 1840, unloaded their horses each night and set them free "after their forelegs had been fastened with enferges or horse locks" (Tixier, 1940, p. 159). Flathead (Turney-High, 1937, p. 109) and Plains Cree (Mandelbaum, 1940, p. 196) use of hide hobbles have been reported. Wilson (1924, pp. 155, 189-190) gives a detailed description and illustration of Hidatsa rawhide hobbles. W. B. Parker (1856, p. 125) noted that the Delaware Indian guides and interpreters, attached to Capt. Marcy's expedition to western Texas in 1854, hobbled their horses at night "by fastening a short loop of rawhide around both forelegs, below the knees, so that the horse could only move by a succession of jumps." He also stated that some years earlier the Army tried the experiment of "hobbling dragoon horses—when on the Plains—with iron hobbles, but had to abandon it, as the Indians invariably killed the horse when they could not get him off." [71]

231 of the owners' best buffalo and war horses, and race horses (if they owned any). Women aided the men in picketing the horses. Men expected their wives to keep alert during the night for the slightest sound that might indicate a clever enemy had slipped into camp and was trying to cut loose these valuable mounts. The preferred picket pin was a forked length of serviceberry about 2 inches in diameter and 22 inches long. One end was driven about a foot into the ground. The line was tied below the fork at the upper end to prevent its slipping off should the horse become restive or frightened. A mild-mannered horse was picketed with a rawhide line tied to one foreleg. A short line with neck fastening was used for picketing a lively animal (fig. 3).[18]

231
● 532

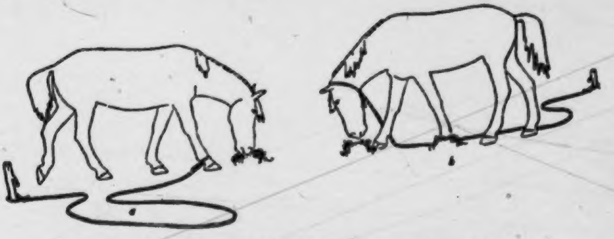


FIGURE 3.—Methods of picketing: *a*, Picketing a gentle horse; *b*, picketing a lively horse.

PASTURAGE

361 312 Before the introduction of horses the two most important requisites for campsites were adequate supplies of firewood and drinking water. The Blackfoot had knowledge of the locations of all running streams, clear lakes, and springs in and near their hunting grounds that afforded 231 [361] clean drinking water for themselves and their dogs. After the acquisition of horses another factor became a prime consideration in selection of campsites—adequate grass for horse feed. This did not mean thick grass. The Blackfoot were aware that horses preferred to graze

---

[171] [18] In his description of the "Archithinue" camp in 1754, Hendry (1907, p. 338) wrote, "their horses . . . when wanted are fastened to a line of Buffalo skin that stretches along & is fastened to stakes in the ground." Lewis and Clark noted that each Lemhi Shoshoni warrior "has one or two (horses) tied to a stake near his hut both night and day, so as to be always prepared for action" (Coues, 1893, vol. 2, p. 558). Picketing of their best horses near their lodges at night has also been reported for the Crow (Denig, 1930, p. 547), Flathead, Pend d'Orielle, and Nez Percé (Irving, 1851, p. 119; Turney-High, 1937, pp. 108–109), Plains Cree (Mandelbaum, 1940, p. 196), Arapaho (Linderman, 1930, p. 127), and Osage (Tixier, 1940, p. 162). Arapaho, Cree, and Flathead owners sometimes took the extra precaution of sleeping with the tether of their favorite horses tied to one of their wrists. Both Blackfoot and Kutenai denied that practice. The Mandan and Hidatsa kept their best horses inside their earth lodges at night to protect them from theft by enemy raiders (Wilson, 1924, pp. 159–161).

492
171
532

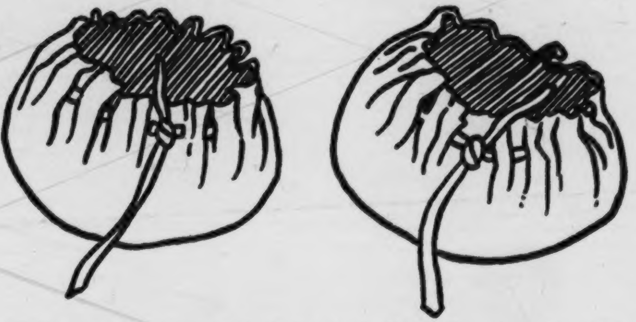


Figure 4.—Rawhide horseshoes similar to Blackfoot type, Arapaho. (After No. 58036, Chicago Museum of Natural History.)

232 moved, the hoof examined, and fresh manure inserted. When the hoof grew out, the shoe was discarded.[29]

TREATMENT OF COLIC AND DISTEMPER

232
278 The Blackfoot treated colic and distemper by the same means, i. e. by pouring plant medicine down the mouth or nose of the ailing horse. If the horse was a lively one it was held down and the medicine administered forcibly; if it was a mild-mannered animal its head

---

232
492
171 [29] Use of rawhide shoes to protect the feet of horses was widespread among horse-using tribes. In the middle of the 18th century Pfefferkorn (1949, p. 147) noted of the Apache in Sonora, "For want of horseshoes, they cover their horse's hoofs with thick horse or oxhide to protect them." In the summer of 1832, Captain Bonneville observed that members of a Crow war party had covered the hoofs of their horses "with shoes of buffalo hide" to protect them from the "sharp and jagged rocks among which they had to pass" (Irving, 1851, p. 58). The Plains Cree used a manure-lined shoe like that employed by the Blackfoot to cure sore-footed horses. A pair of Arapaho rawhide horseshoes, catalog No. 58,036, Chicago Museum of Natural History, collected by George Dorsey in 1905 from the Wind River Reservation, is reproduced as figure 4. This specimen is identical with descriptions of Blackfoot horseshoes. An elderly Kiowa told me his people formerly used rawhide shoes in the treatment of sore-footed horses. Chiracahua Apache employed rawhide "horse moccasins" for the same purpose (Opler, 1941, p. 396). Kutenai are said to have laughed at Flathead for making little boots to protect their dog's feet. However, the reference (Turney-High, 1941, p. 70) does not mention Flathead employment of "boots" for horses.

White traders and explorers in the northern Plains on some occasions adopted the Indian's practice of providing rawhide shoes to protect their horses' feet. Larocque used them on his journey from the Crow encampment on the Yellowstone River back to the Hidatsa villages in the fall of 1805 (Larocque, 1910, p. 49). Capt. Wm. Clark's party, eastbound down the Yellowstone Valley in July 1806, made "a sort of moccasin of green buffalo skin" to relieve their horses' worn feet (Coues, 1893, vol. 3, p. 1137). Captain Bonneville, in the fall of 1832, made buffalohide shoes for his foot-worn horses while traveling through rocky country near the Wind River Mountains (Irving, 1851, p. 234).

In the summer of 1854, Parker (1856, p. 203) saw the wife of a Southern Comanche chief "leading a horse and mule slowly backwards and forwards through a slow fire" which was "the process of hardening the hoofs by exposing them to the smoke and vapour of the wild rosemary-artemisia." I have found no other reference to this practice among Plains Indians.

the number of poor quality stallions around the camps. However, 232
Buffalo Back Fat, head chief of the Blood tribe, a keen student of horses, is known to have advised members of his family, "Don't cut your stallion too young. Wait until he is four years old. Let him have a chance to chase mares. He will be a good runner, a good feeder, and an easily managed, fancy horse."

Usually a number of horses were castrated the same day. The operation was performed by specialists. Piegan informants mentioned the names of a half dozen men of their tribe who were expert gelders. Among them were the wealthy horse owners, Stingy, Many-White-Horses, and Bull Shoe. The specialists were paid for their services. 232
If a man had several horses castrated, he might give the surgeon a horse. If he had one or two horses gelded he made payment in less 465
valuable articles, such as robes, blankets, saddle blankets, plain skin or cloth shirts, or arrows.

A corral was not deemed necessary for castrating. The operation 232
was performed in the open near the lodges of the camp. The horse to be gelded was thrown down. One hind leg was drawn between the two front ones and the three legs tied securely with a rawhide rope. The other hind leg was trussed up and held by a second rope. Details of one common method of trussing are shown in figure 5. Without prayer or ceremony of any kind the surgeon set to work. With a sharp 232
butcher knife he cut a hole in the scrotum, squeezed out the testicles, wrapped and tied the cords by which they were suspended, then severed the testicles and threw them away. It was customary for the surgeon to ask the horse owner what material he wished used for tying, before the operation was begun. Some men insisted on the use of deer or [291]
antelope sinew, which they thought would make their horses fleet. After the operation some men picked up a testicle and tried to roll it along the horse's back, saying, "This will surely be a fast buffalo horse." This was the closest approach to ritual connected with the operation.

232
532

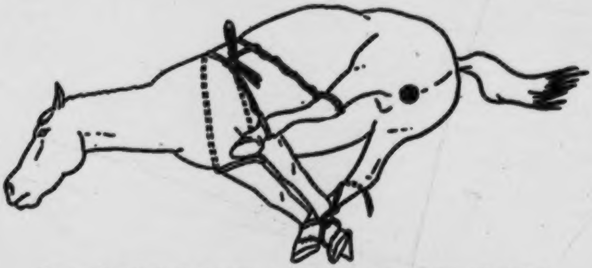


FIGURE 5.—Method of tying a stallion for castrating, Blackfoot.

were in their middle or late teens. A few fellows were afraid to 231
break horses, and never did.[38] The Blackfoot-owned horses usu- 492
ally were halter or hackamore broken before they were broken to ride. 883
Four methods of horse breaking were employed by the Blackfoot tribes. Each method was described by four or more informants.

231
492

231
492
532

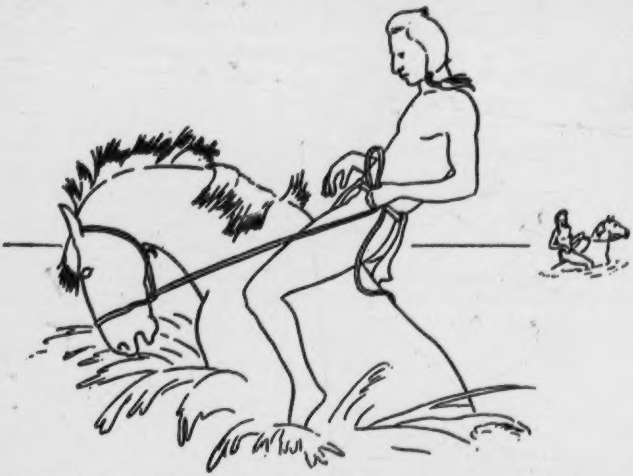


FIGURE 6.—Breaking a bronco by riding it in a pond or stream, Blackfoot.

POND OR STREAM BREAKING

(FIG. 6)

Sometimes a group of boys went to an owner of a large herd and 231
asked him if they could break some of his colts in the water of a 492
nearby pond, lake, or stream. If the owner consented, he pointed out the animals they might break and warned them he would not be responsible if any of the boys were hurt. Sometimes boys took colts from a man's herd without his permission and broke them in the water. When the owner learned what they had done he gave them a good tongue lashing.

Weasel Tail described this method:

> I have broken horses in a stream. It was an easy way to break them. Two boys rode double on a trained horse, leading the bronc by a rope or halter into

---

[38] Among the Hidatsa "colts were broken by boys fourteen to seventeen years of age" (Wilson, 1924, p. 151). Tixier, in 1840, reported that the Comanche compelled their male prisoners to train those horses that were reputed untamable (Tixier, 1940, p. 270). Of course, many Comanche prisoners were Mexicans, who were expert horsemen. [171]

around its neck while another man slipped a war bridle in his mouth, 231
and the rider (a third person) jumped on his back. At other times the 492
bronco was "front-footed" (both front feet roped with rawhide lasso), and the horse was thrown down. The rider took his place as the horse started to rise and the rope was loosened. Still another method was to "front-foot" the bronco, lasso one hind leg and pull it slightly forward so the horse could not kick while the rider mounted, then loosen the ropes. A fourth method called for first "front-footing"

231
492
532

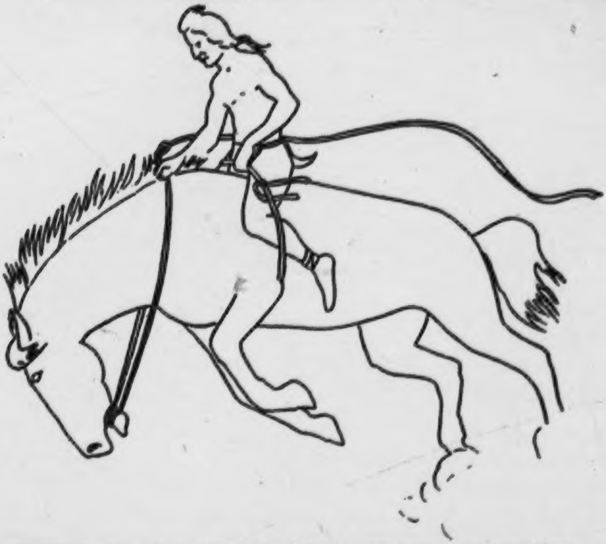


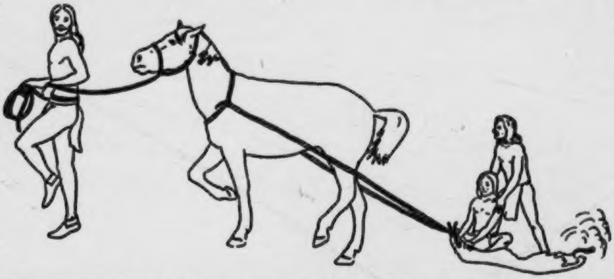
FIGURE 7.—Breaking a bronco by riding it with a surcingle, Blackfoot.

the beast, then wrapping a rope around all four legs and blindfolding 231
the horse with a piece of robe until the rider took his seat. Then the 492
ropes were released and the blindfold removed.

In employing the surcingle method of breaking, the rider carried a long band of rawhide or soft buffalo skin. As he mounted the bronco he pulled this strap around the horse's belly, enclosing his own knees and shanks, and quickly tied the band in a common knot in front of him. The surcingle was tied tight enough so that by exerting pressure with his knees against the band he could keep from falling, yet loose enough so that he could extricate his legs quickly if the horse should fall. It often took three days of breaking by the surcingle method before the horse was ready for the saddle. Each day the rider stayed on the horse until it was played out.

mare over 4 years of age. Some people preferred a former saddle horse 8 or 9 years old to draw the travois. 231

An unbroken horse would not haul a travois. The horse had to be specially trained for this task. One common method of training employed in buffalo days was to make a simple harness, consisting of a rawhide rope around the horse's neck with a long rawhide line attached to it at each side extending backward and tied to a dry buffalo hide on the ground a few feet back of the horse's hind legs. Some people preferred a single rawhide rope tied to the horse's tail and the buffalo hide. The rope was always long enough so that the horse could not kick the hide. While one or more men led the horse by a halter, one to three men or boys rode on the hide over a selected plot of ground relatively smooth and free from stones. The horse might jump and kick at first. It might even break away from the leaders and 492



231
492
532●

FIGURE 8.—Breaking a horse to the travois by training it to drag a weighted buffalo hide, Blackfoot.

spill the riders. But in time it became used to being led and to the weight drawn behind it, and quieted down. Then it would submit to the travois. (See fig. 8.) 231 492

Other Blackfoot Indians preferred to train travois horses by making them pull tipi poles crossed over their heads, as in the horse travois, or two heavy cottonwood poles similarly arranged. This makeshift travois was placed on the horse for short periods on several successive days until the horse became accustomed to the weight. Then the real travois was substituted. A horse trained to the travois readily learned to carry the additional weight of a person riding on its back. However, unless it had previously been used for riding, it would not make a good saddle horse.

TEACHING CHILDREN TO RIDE

Blackfoot children were accustomed to horses from infancy. As babies they were carried on their mother's backs on horseback when 492 868 [854]

492 868 [854] camp was moved. When they were able to sit up they rode on the travois or behind their mothers on horseback. They became familiar with the motion of a walking horse, so that by the time they were old enough to learn to ride alone their fear of horses was partially overcome. Training involved primarily teaching children to maintain their balance on horseback and to use the reins, and the proper horse commands to control the actions of their mounts.

Riding lessons were given children by their fathers or mothers near the lodges in the camp of their band. No effort was made to clear the camp of other riders or children when a child took his first lesson.

492
868
● 532

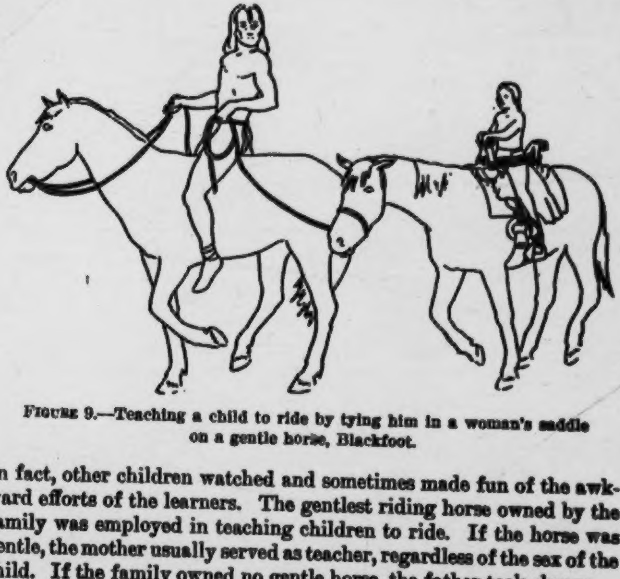


FIGURE 9.—Teaching a child to ride by tying him in a woman's saddle on a gentle horse, Blackfoot.

492 868 In fact, other children watched and sometimes made fun of the awkward efforts of the learners. The gentlest riding horse owned by the family was employed in teaching children to ride. If the horse was gentle, the mother usually served as teacher, regardless of the sex of the child. If the family owned no gentle horse, the father took charge.

My eldest informants said they learned to ride in this manner: The child was lifted into a high-horned woman's saddle and rawhide ropes were passed back and forth between the pommel and cantle on each side, and tied securely to prevent the child's falling. If afraid, the child could also hold onto the saddle horn. The parent, afoot or astride another horse, led the child's horse about camp by a hackamore. (See fig. 9.) At first the horse was led at a slow walk. As the child gained in experience and confidence, the horse was led at a swifter

283 lashes. After cutting she oiled the ropes with back fat. One buffalo-hide thus made two ropes of equal length, 17 or more feet long.

Other ropemakers employed somewhat different methods. Some cut the entire buffalo hide in a strip 2 fingers wide. They could cut one very long rope or two shorter ones this width from a hide. Some did not use a buffalo skull for dehairing, but removed all the hair with a rock. Some insisted on using coyote or badger fat to oil their ropes. Others dragged the ropes on the ground behind a horse for a time to make them soft and slick.[44]

492
● 532
284

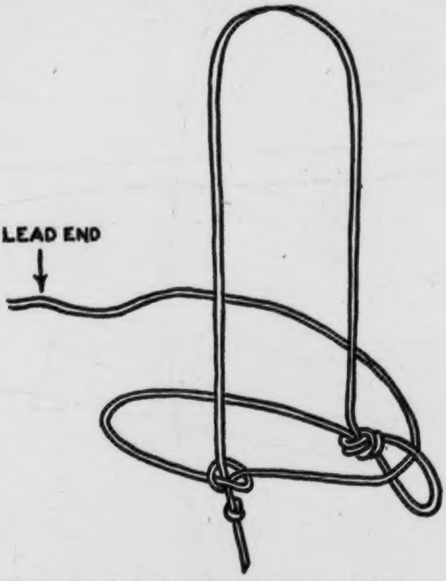


Figure 10.—A simple rawhide hackamore, Blackfoot.

HACKAMORES

492 The Blackfoot used a simple hackamore for halter breaking horses, breaking them to ride, and leading horses when moving camp. The hackamore was generally of a single rawhide strand 2 fingers wide. A common Blackfoot hackamore is shown in figure 10.

[M1] [44] Descriptions of ropemaking by the Gros Ventres, Hidatsa, and Kutenai mention minor differences in process (Kroeber, 1907, p. 150; Wilson, 1924, pp. 186–187; Turney-High, 1941, pp. 75–76). We cannot be sure if these were tribal or merely individual differences in method. Kiowa informants stated that women did most of their ropemaking.

492 283 hunting buffalo and for general riding purposes. It was a two-rein bridle formed of a single length of rope with a honda (fixed loop at the end of one rein through which the other rein passes). The end with the honda served as one rein, at the foreward part of which two half hitches were taken, placed in the horse's mouth, and tightened around his lower jaw. (Some men tied a knot in the rope below the half hitches to keep them from slipping.) The rope continued around the other side of the horse's neck (serving as a second rein), passed through the honda, and the long end remaining was carefully folded or coiled and placed under the rider's belt at one side. (See fig. 11.)

492
283
● 592

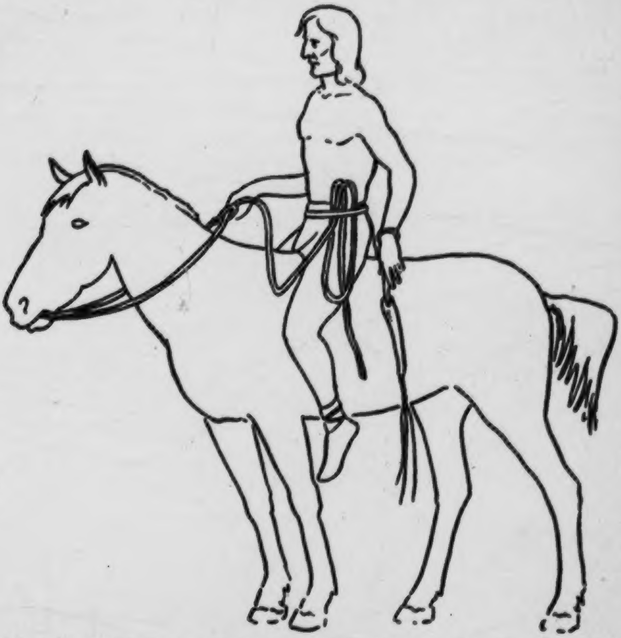


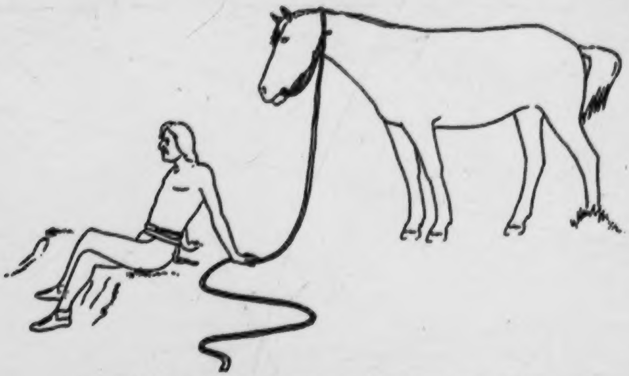
FIGURE 11.—Rider using a rawhide war bridle with the end of one rein coiled under his belt, Blackfoot.

492 283 Since these ropes were from 16 to 30 feet long, their greatest portion remained tucked under the belt. If the rider was thrown from his horse he could catch hold of the end of this rope as it payed out along the ground. There was always the danger, however, that the rope

might become tangled or knotted under the belt so that when the rider was thrown or forced to dismount hurriedly from a moving horse he might be injured or killed. 492 283

Although two half hitches were most commonly used for the jaw fastening, three half hitches were employed to control a spirited horse that was difficult to handle. When the rider pulled hard on the reins the rawhide swelled in the horse's mouth and made it uncomfortable for him. For race horses a single half hitch was preferred. It left the horse's mouth freer and made him less likely to become winded. 492 284

The honda was made in several ways. Some men simply pierced the rope near the end and strengthened the loop by wrapping sinew around it. Others used a ring made from a narrow cross section of a buffalo horn. Much preferred was a small metal ring obtained from white traders. If a ring was employed, the end of the rope was passed through the ring, doubled back and securely sewn with sinew. The honda served another useful purpose. When the rider dismounted he could pass the short rein over the horse's neck, pull on the long rein, and hold his mount halter fashion. (See fig. 12.) Wissler also noted this practice (Wissler, 1910, p. 96). In riding, the reins were held at the honda or slightly forward of it. 492



492
532●

FIGURE 12.—Use of the war bridle as a halter, Blackfoot.

492

To keep a horse's head high when on parade, a long loop of the bridle rope was left pendent under the jaw. This loop would swing as the horse moved and would strike the animal on the nose if he did not keep his head up. Members of returning war parties sometimes tied scalps to the bridle under the horse's jaw for the same purpose.

492 raw buffalo hide, which in drying binds every part tight. This frame rises about ten inches before and behind; the tops are bent over horizontally and spread out, forming a flat piece about six inches in diameter." He believed this saddle type was older than the pad saddle (Henry and Thompson, 1897, vol. 2, p. 527). In 1833, Maximilian observed this saddle and noted that both pommel and cantle "frequently has a leather fringe hanging from it" (Maximilian, 1906, vol. 23, p. 107). Gustavus Sohon shows this type of saddle ridden by the two women in the left background of his field sketch, "The Bloods Come in Council," drawn in 1855. The men in the foreground appear to be riding pad saddles. (Pl. 4.)^

492 322 In making a wood saddle a woman split a green cottonwood log and trimmed two pieces to equal size about one-half inch thick, 16 to 20 inches long, and 3 or 4 inches wide, for the sideboards. Three Calf said his mother bent the sideboards slightly by pressure over the shaft of a travois while the wood was still green. Two forks of green cottonwood were carefully selected for pommel and cantle. Care was taken that they should be approximately the same size and that both prongs of each fork should be of equal thickness. The top of each fork was bent and trimmed with a knife to a flat disk shape and the ends of the prongs were curved. A small hole was burned in the front of the piece to be used for the pommel just above the junction of the prongs and a straight wooden spike tightly fitted into the hole. With a red-hot iron rod two pairs of holes were burned in the sideboards at both sides of each prong, the outer surfaces of the lower portions of the prongs were grooved, and were tied to the sideboards by buckskin thongs passed through the grooves and the sideboard holes.

492
● 532

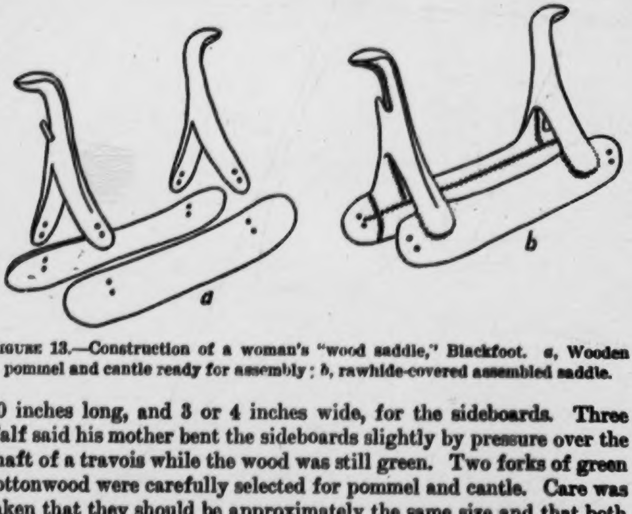


FIGURE 13.—Construction of a woman's "wood saddle," Blackfoot. *a*, Wooden pommel and cantle ready for assembly; *b*, rawhide-covered assembled saddle.

^ [See category 492, p. 358-C--Analyst]

492 rings were introduced smaller metal rings useful for hondas also began to be offered in trade.

177 The cinch was a band of rawhide about 4 inches wide. One end was doubled and tied around the girth ring on the left side of the
492 saddle. The band passed under the horse's belly and was fastened to the rawhide or metal ring suspended from the rigging straps on the right side of the saddle. Several methods of fastening were

492
● 532

[284]

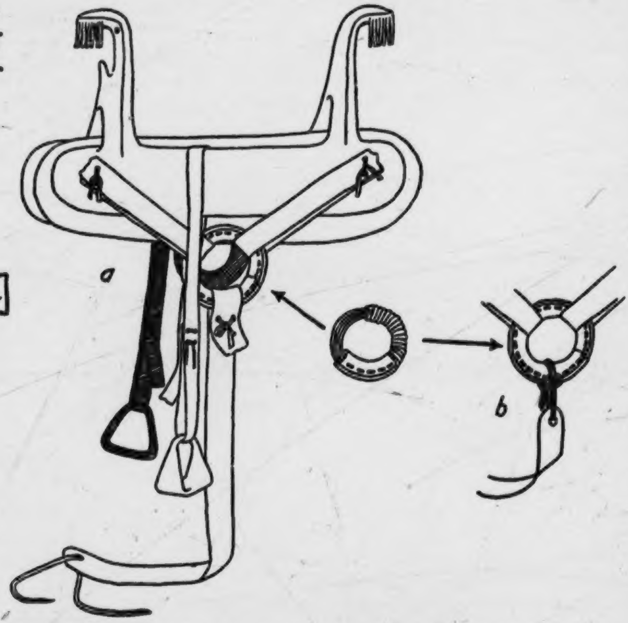


FIGURE 14.—Rigging of a woman's saddle, Blackfoot. *a*, View, left side; *b*, detail of latigo tie on right side.

492 employed. The simplest method was to punch a hole near the loose end of the girth, pass a rawhide latigo cord through it and tie the cord to the right-side ring. Some people preferred to fold the end of the girth and sew it to give the added strength of two thicknesses of rawhide at the point of strain. Another common method of securing the girth was to sew a rawhide or metal ring in the end of the girth band, and tie this ring to the right-side ring suspended from
[284] the rigging straps with a rawhide cord. Some people used a half

492
● 532

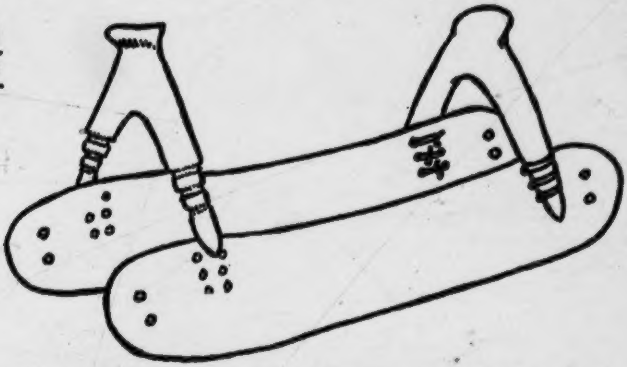


FIGURE 15.—Construction of a "prairie chicken snare saddle," Blackfoot.

492 hide flaps to the centers of pommel and cantle. Holes were punched in the flaps and, after the load was in place, a rawhide line was passed back and forth over the pack and through these holes and tied to hold
[531] the load securely and prevent its shifting. This saddle^ was never decorated. It could be made with less time and effort than either the pad or wood saddle. Thus it was less valuable. These factors undoubtedly encouraged its wide use.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE "PRAIRIE CHICKEN SNARE SADDLE"

492
171 There is every reason to believe that the "prairie chicken snare saddle" is not an old type among the Plains Indians. Alexander Henry made no mention of it in his description of Blackfoot saddles in 1809. Bradley, writing in the 1870's, was the first to mention the use of elkhorn in Blackfoot saddle construction. This saddle type does not appear in the works of artists who interpreted the Plains Indians from personal observations in the field prior to 1850. Kurz did not illustrate it in his many representations of saddles seen by him among the Upper Missouri tribes in 1851-52. In his description of the Cheyenne use of this saddle type, Grinnell (1923, vol. 1, p. 207) termed it a comparatively modern invention of the Kiowa, from whom the Cheyenne learned how to make it.

If we may credit this explanation of the origin of the "prairie chicken snare saddle," we must recognize that the type spread rapidly over the Plains and deep into the Plateau as far as the Sanpoil and Thompson (Ray, 1932, p. 118; Wissler, 1915, fig. 20). Its use by Coeur d'Alene, Plains Cree, and Teton Dakota has been reported

^ [i.e., a "prairie chicken snare saddle"—Analyst]

492 monness in buffalo days. In former times those objects[A] were indices of their owner's wealth and status.

531 Bodmer illustrated a fancy crupper on a Blackfoot man's horse
[541] in 1833 (Maximilian, 1906, Atlas, pl. 19). However, the earliest pic-
[178] torial representation of the elaborately decorated martingale and crupper combination I have seen appears in Sohon's 1855 field sketch, "The
[556] Bloods Come in Council" (pl. 4).[B] In size and shape the pieces portrayed by Bodmer and Sohon resemble specimens collected in more recent years. Bradley (1870's) stated that the Blackfoot woman's ornamental crupper had a fringe of horsehair to the lower ends of which little bells were attached. In my informants' youth cut buckskin fringes were also used. The ornamental crupper had a soft skin or trade flannel base. It was decorated with beadwork or (if of skin) in angular painted designs "something like a parfleche design." In more recent times (since ca. 1875) floral designs, combined with the double-curve have been employed commonly. Martingales were similarly ornamented (Wissler, 1915, fig. 15; Ewers, 1945 b, figs. 61-63).

492 Much more common in buffalo days were martingales and cruppers of narrow bands of rawhide, used on the riding horses of both sexes and on pack animals. The martingale was a rawhide band about 3 fingers wide, tied to the prongs of the pommel of the wood saddle by rawhide cords. The crupper was a single or double strip about the same width throughout most of its length, extended by means of a grass-padded loop, strengthened with soft skin binding, under the horse's tail. It was tied to the front or rear horn prongs of the frame
[531] saddle with buckskin cord (fig. 16). Some women painted the sur-

492
532

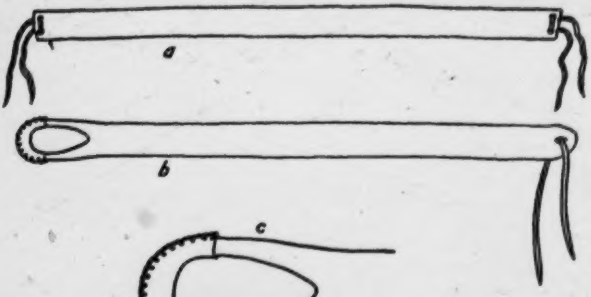


FIGURE 16.—a, Simple rawhide martingale; b, simple rawhide crupper; c, detail of crupper tail pad, Blackfoot.

A [i.e., elaborately decorated martingales and cruppers --Analyst]

B [See category 492, p. 358-C--Analyst]

492 than necessary so that if the front of the handle cracked they could
turn the whip around and use the hanger end for the lash until they
492 had an opportunity to make a new whip. Women generally made
whip handles of serviceberry. A hole was burned through the handle
322 about 2 inches from the lash end, and shallow channels were cut in
283 each side leading from this hole to the lash end of the handle. A narrow
rawhide lash was pushed through the hole and passed through a
longitudinal slit in the rawhide at the end of the handle. The two
ends were then braided a few times. The remainder of the lashing
hung loose. One or two inches from the other end of the handle
another hole was burned through which the rawhide wrist hanger was
passed.

492 Elkhorn-handled whips were made while the horn was green.
The honeycomb center at the front end of the handle was burned out
321 with a hot wire. A small hole was then burned at one side of the handle
about 2 inches from the front. The rawhide lashing was then
doubled and the folded end pushed into the front hole far enough so
that a wooden or antler plug could be driven into the side hole to hold
the rawhide in place. The wrist hanger was attached as was that of
the wooden-handled whip. Some wooden-handled ones also used the
plug method of lash attachment (fig. 17).

492
321
322
532

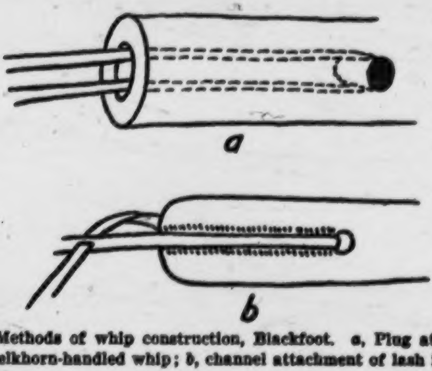


FIGURE 17.—Methods of whip construction, Blackfoot. *a*, Plug attachment of lash in an elkhorn-handled whip; *b*, channel attachment of lash in a wooden-handled whip.

492 These were the most common Blackfoot whip types. However,
other forms were made occasionally. A unique specimen is the whip
492 with a wooden handle carved in the form of a horse's head, in the
collections of the Museum of the Plains Indian. This whip was used
796 by the medicine women during the ritualized preliminary marches
[532] to the Sun Dance encampment. However, the whip employed in the

492
493
908
2384
5952

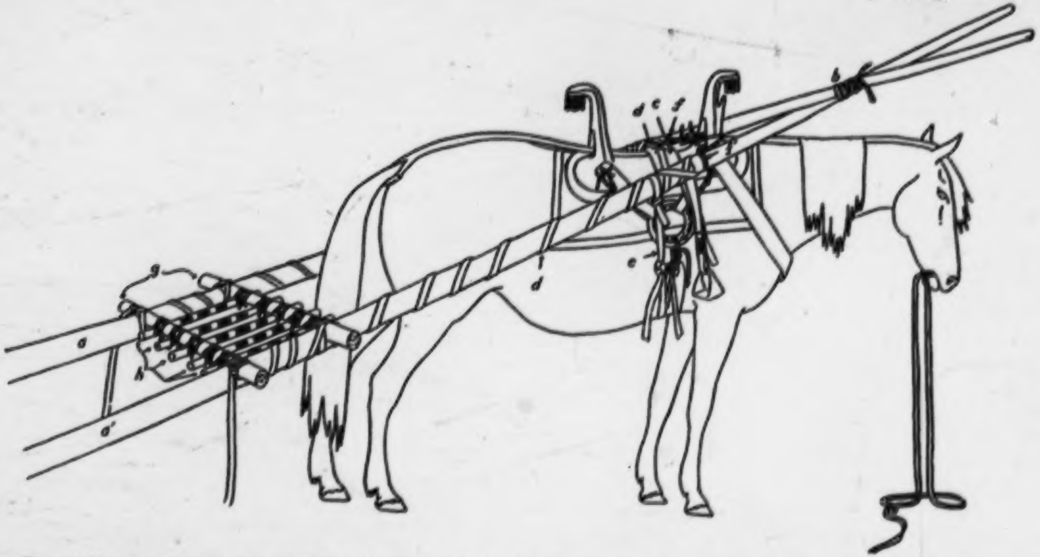


FIGURE 18.—Construction of a Blackfoot horse travois. *a*, *a'*, Shafts; *b*, forward tie; *c*, rawhide hitch pad; *d*, rawhide hitch and pole wrapping line; *e*, girth strap; *f*, *f'*, rawhide cord saddle ties; *g*, primary struts, loading platform; *h*, secondary struts, loading platform.

Black Boy made a horse travois for the permanent collections of the Museum of the Plains Indian in 1942.[60] 493

THE LODGEPOLE HITCH

A specialized gear, which I shall term the lodgepole hitch, was employed by the Blackfoot for transporting lodgepoles in moving camp. 492 An equal number of poles was dragged at each side of the horse or

492
532

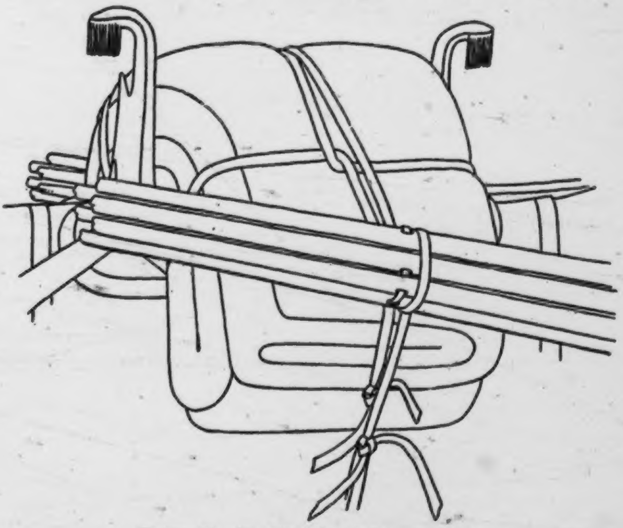


FIGURE 19.—The Blackfoot lodgepole hitch.

mule, the number varying with the size and weight of the poles employed in the owner's lodge and with the strength of the transport 492 animal. A small hole about one-half inch in diameter was burned through each pole about 18 inches from its upper end with a hot iron rod. The poles to be dragged by each animal were laid on the ground in two piles. A rawhide line was then threaded through each group of poles. They were then lifted to the sides of the animal and the two rawhide lines were tied together over the center of the horse's back. In some instances the poles were further secured by a rawhide line connecting the two groups of poles and passing under the animal's belly (fig. 19). However, many women omitted this line, pre-

---

[60] The Blackfoot experience with Government issue wagons was paralleled on the Crow Reservation. Although they began to receive wagons as early as 1874, the Crow had little use for the light-weight, narrow-gage vehicles. They traded them to white men for more useful articles until the Indian Service forbade Whites to accept these ID-marked vehicles. Meanwhile the Crow continued to use "lodgepole transports" (Marquis, 1928, pp. 147, 126-127). Enoch Smoky claimed the Kiowa made little use of wagons before ca. 1890. [171]

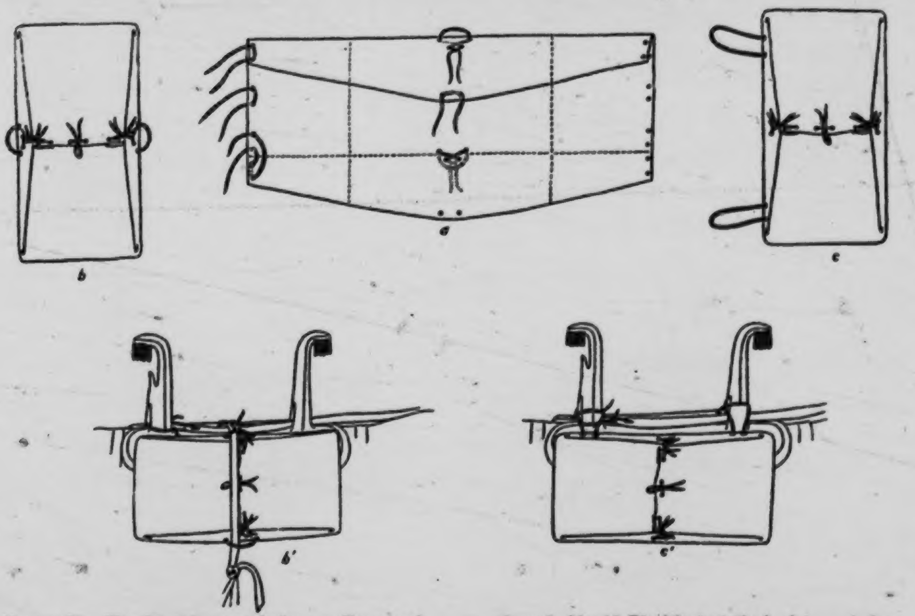


FIGURE 20.—The Blackfoot parfleche. *a*, Form and construction; *b*, *b′*, old Blackfoot method of transportation by packhorse; *c*, *c′*, method of transportation by packhorse adopted from Crow Indians.

415
492
599
1171

415 pairs, identical in size and decoration. Wissler (1910, p. 81) found that the average size of Blackfoot parfleches in the collections of the [492] American Museum of Natural History at that time was 60 cm. in length by 38 cm. in width. Probably the great majority of those specimens were made since the days when parfleches were in general use in moving camp. However, there is no indication that the sizes or proportions of Blackfoot parfleches changed materially after these ● [532] Indians settled on reservations. Parfleches were painted only on the flaps, the only portions visible when they were transported by packhorse. Thus use served to determine the field of decoration.

415 492 Blackfoot informants declared that there were two methods of attaching the parfleche to the horse in use among their people. They are illustrated in figure 20. The method claimed to have been the oldest among the Blackfoot is shown at the left (*b*, *b'*). Two holes were burned with a hot iron near the center of each long side of each parfleche, through which short cords of rawhide were passed and tied. A band of rawhide about 1 inch broad was passed around the horse's belly outside the parfleches and through these loops to bind the cases tight to the sides of the animal. Then the topmost cord loops of the two parfleches were tied together to prevent the cases from slipping. [177] The other method was one that Weasel Tail said was adopted from the Crow, although he could not give the time of its adoption. In this method two sets of holes were burned in one long side of the parfleche, longer rawhide cords were passed through them and over the horn of the saddle (fig. 20, *c*, *c'*).[43]

ANTIQUITY OF THE PARFLECHE

175 415 It appears probable that the parfleche, so admirably adapted to horse transport, originated after the Plains Indians acquired horses. Weasel Tail was sure the Blackfoot tribes did not make the parfleche in pre-horse times. His grandmother had told him that before the Blood Indians acquired horses they used a container termed "Gros Ventres bag." It was made of a soft-tanned buffaloskin in the shape of a shallow globe (when filled), closed at the top by a drawstring,

---

[170] [43] The photograph in pl. 5, *b*, definitely shows the use of this second method by the Crow. Maggie No Fat told me this was the Oglala method, and Kiowa informants described its use by that tribe also, although they said a rawhide rope was commonly passed around the barrel of the horse also to confine the cases to the sides of the animal and prevent joggling. Granville Stuart's general statement on parfleche transportation by the Indians of Montana in 1865, mentions, "Two loops of small cord are fastened on each side near the ends, which are used to hang over the forks of the packsaddle, a rope is then passed around and lashed tight, which binds the parfleches firmly and enables the horse to carry them easily" (Stuart, 1865, p. 78). The Flathead, Coeur d'Alene, and Okanagon are reported to have used the method of parfleche suspension by loops over the saddle horns (Teit, 1930, pp. 112, 221, 352). In 1819, the Omaha transported their dried meat in "quadrangular packages, each of a suitable size to attach conveniently to one side of the packsaddle of a horse" (James, 1823, vol. 1, p. 212). This appears to be the earliest reference to the use of parfleches as luggage by any Plains Indian tribe.

suspect that it had a wider distribution in the northern Plains. I 415
described the double-bag to Kiowa informants. They were entirely 171
unfamiliar with it.

In view of the limited data available on the double-bag it is impossible to determine either its origin or antiquity. It may have been 415
an Indian invention, or it may have been adapted from saddlebags employed by trappers and traders in the Indian Country.

415
492
532

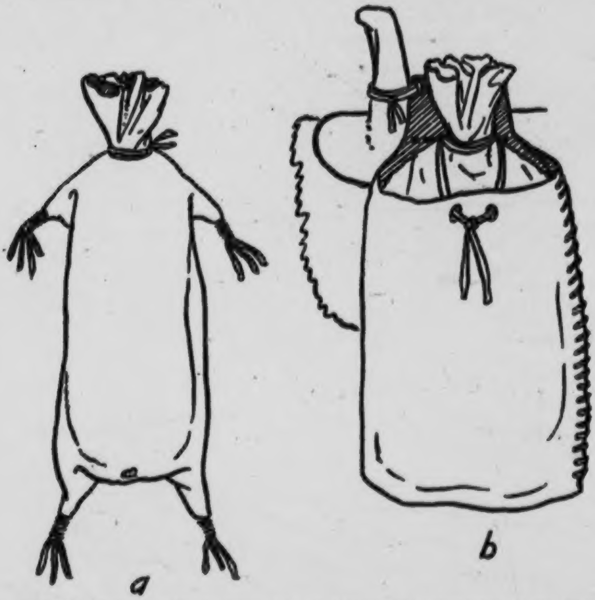


FIGURE 21.—a, Buffalo calfskin berry bag; b, berry bag transported in the pocket of a double-bag on saddle of a packhorse, Blackfoot.

PRINCIPAL ITEMS OF LUGGAGE TRANSPORTED BY RIDING HORSES 415

The Blackfoot commonly used three types of luggage in carrying 492
articles on riding horses. Generally these were placed on the horse ridden by a woman of the household when camp was moved. Items carried in these containers are listed on pages 136–137.

THE DOUBLE SADDLEBAG

The double saddlebag (illustrated in Wissler, 1910, p. 95, and 415
Ewers, 1945 b, p. 57) was made from a rectangular piece of soft 281

415 281 dressed skin about 60 inches long by 24 inches wide. This piece was doubled on the long dimension and the edges sewn together. A longitudinal slit, cut in the center of its length, served as the opening of the bag. Long, cut fringes (15 inches or more in length) were sewn to the ends of the bag. According to the Blackfoot ideal these fringes should be long enough to fall below the horse's belly when the bag is
415 531 in place across the horse's back. In earlier times, probably before 1870, these bags were decorated with panels of painted or quilled designs in rectangular areas the width of the pendent sides. Specimens of more recent manufacture have these panels in beadwork over a background of red or black flannel.

415
492
● 532

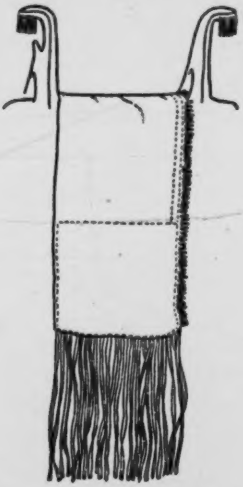


FIGURE 22.—Double saddlebag thrown over a woman's saddle for transportation, Blackfoot.

415 531

415 492 Double saddlebags were transported in either of two ways. Most commonly they seem to have been thrown over the center of the woman's saddle, hanging an equal distance at each side (fig. 22). The rider threw a buffalo robe over the bag then mounted on top of it. Thus the distance between the pommel and cantle of the woman's saddle determined the proper width of the saddlebag (about 12 inches). Less commonly the saddlebag was placed over the cantle of the saddle through the slit opening at the center of the bag. A little over half its width then rested on the horse's back behind the

saddle. The Blackfoot considered the double saddlebag a woman's piece of luggage. Men did not carry these bags on their horses.[64] 415 492 [562]

RECTANGULAR RAWHIDE SADDLEBAGS

Single saddlebags of rawhide were commonly transported on women's horses. The rectangular bag was made from a single piece of rawhide, folded at the bottom and laced together along the sides. It was closed by a flap at the top. The side exposed to view (when [532] the case was hung over a saddle horn, by a skin cord passed through two holes burned in the back a short distance below the top flap) generally was painted in geometric design. Some of these cases had long, cut-skin fringes pendent from the side seams. The construction and decoration of this type of bag is described and illustrated by Wissler (1910, pp. 76–78) and Ewers (1945 b, p. 18).[65] (See fig. 23, *b*.)

CYLINDRICAL RAWHIDE SADDLEBAGS

The cylindrical container is made of three pieces of rawhide. The largest piece was rolled into a tube and the overlapping long edges laced together. The other two pieces were rawhide disks which served as covers for the tube, one tied over each end of the tube by buckskin cords. Many cylindrical cases of this type have long, cut-skin fringes pendent from the long side seam. (See illus. in Wissler, 1910, pp. 78–79, and Ewers, 1945 b, p. 18). This tubular case was suspended from the saddle horn in traveling. Two holes were burned in the tube at a point opposite the seam, and a skin cord was passed through them and over the saddle horn. Painted, geometric designs were used in [532] the decoration of this case. As this type of case was used primarily for carrying ceremonial objects it was less common than the rectangular form[66] (fig. 23, *a*).

If the rawhide parfleche was a post-metal-knife development among the Plains tribes, as has been suggested (p. 116), it is probable that

---

[64] This type of container is well represented in Museum collections from the northern [171] Plains. Some specimens from the Teton Dakota are exquisitely beaded. Teit (1930, pp. 111, 354) recorded its use by the Couer d'Alene and Flathead. The double saddlebags of the Apache are distinguished by the use of cut-leather decoration. However, Kiowa informants said that tribe did not make this type of bag in their youth, although they obtained some of them in trade from other tribes. The fur trader, Charles Larpenteur, implied that the form of this saddlebag was copied from the Whites, although it was in common use among the Upper Missouri tribes in his time (i. e. ante-1850) (Larpenteur, 1898, p. 67).

[65] Wissler (1910, pp. 77–78) has recorded the occurrence of this type of bag among the [171] Sarsi, Gros Ventres, Kutenai, Yakima, Nez Percé, Arapaho, Dakota, and Thompson. Teit has described and illustrated them from the Flathead and Coeur d'Alene (Teit, 1930, pp. 111, 354).

[66] Similar cases were employed by other Plains and Plateau tribes. Wissler (1910, [171] p. 79) reports them from such widely separated tribes as the Nez Percé, Ute, Assiniboin, and Comanche. Kiowa informants told me members of that tribe formerly used the cylindrical rawhide case for storing and transporting feather bonnets exclusively.

415
492
532

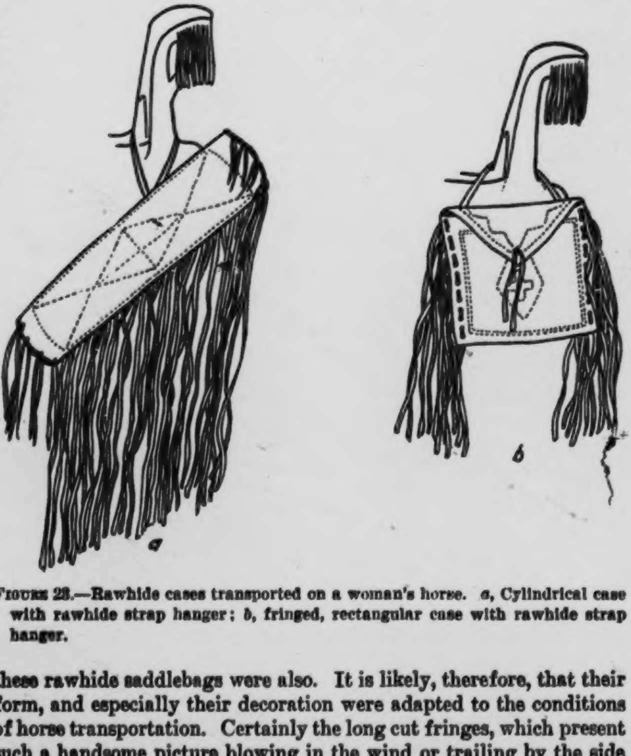


FIGURE 28.—Rawhide cases transported on a woman's horse. *a*, Cylindrical case with rawhide strap hanger; *b*, fringed, rectangular case with rawhide strap hanger.

415 these rawhide saddlebags were also. It is likely, therefore, that their 492 form, and especially their decoration were adapted to the conditions of horse transportation. Certainly the long cut fringes, which present such a handsome picture blowing in the wind or trailing by the side of the riding horse would have been an impractical nuisance if placed [556] on a dog or carried on the low-slung dog travois. Even in the late years of their nomadic existence it was the wealthly families among the Blackfoot who owned the most elaborately decorated luggage. The saddlebags and rawhide cases carried on the riding horses of favorite wives were thought to dress up the horse and make the women look well on horseback.

342
492
●532

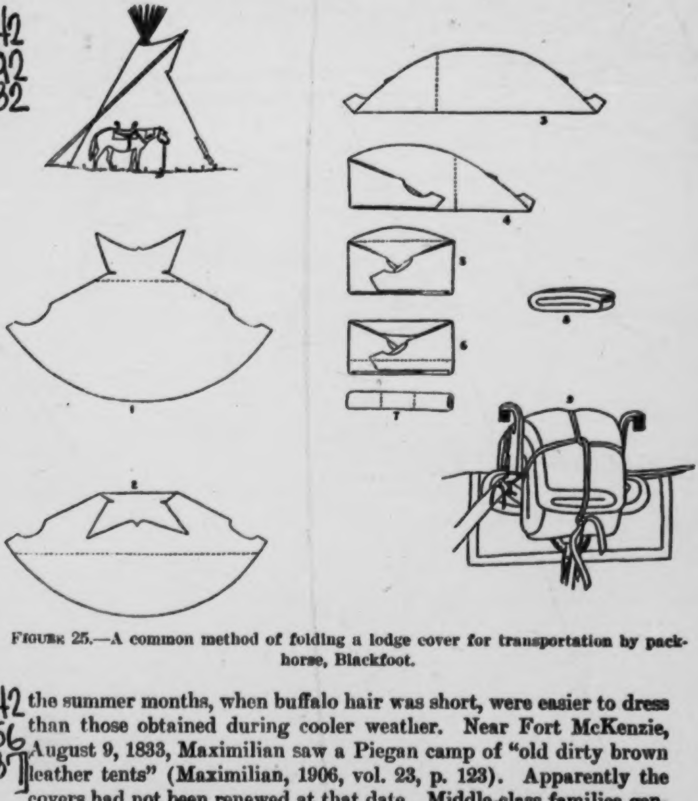
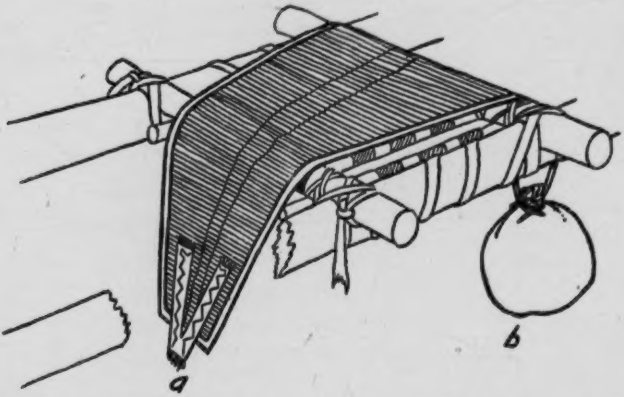


FIGURE 25.—A common method of folding a lodge cover for transportation by packhorse, Blackfoot.

342
556
[237]
the summer months, when buffalo hair was short, were easier to dress than those obtained during cooler weather. Near Fort McKenzie, August 9, 1833, Maximilian saw a Piegan camp of "old dirty brown leather tents" (Maximilian, 1906, vol. 23, p. 123). Apparently the covers had not been renewed at that date. Middle-class families generally renewed their lodge covers every other year, while poor families often were content to rely upon the kindness of wealthy men to give them old lodge covers after they had made new ones. The rich family's large cover was cut down to meet the needs of the poor one by trimming several feet off the base of it to make a much smaller cone.

342
492
The lodge cover was folded neatly and carefully to pack it for transport. One of several methods of folding employed by the Piegan is illustrated in figure 25. Some women preferred to begin by rolling the sides of the lodge toward the center, then folded over the ear flaps, folding up a portion of the bottom and providing a somewhat larger pack. Others first made a fold along the vertical axis at the center



492
532

FIGURE 26.—*a*, Placement of a willow backrest on the bottom of a travois load to enhance the appearance of the travois from the rear; *b*, method of transporting water in a paunch container.

the load making it "look pretty" (fig. 26, *a*).[77] All of the items placed on a travois sometimes were wrapped in an old lodge cover and tied securely with rawhide rope 2 to 3 fingers wide, to protect them from dust, rain, or snow. If a family owned a great many buffalo robes they sometimes transported them on a makeshift platform of two crosspieces tied to the bundles of lodgepoles trailed by a pole-dragging horse. 492

PACKING FOOD

Dry meat, tallow, and pemmican in quantity were transported in parfleches, either in pairs suspended from each side of a pack horse (fig. 20) or on the travois platform. Small quantities of meat or pemmican to be eaten for lunch en route were carried in rectangular rawhide bags hung from the horn of a woman's saddle.[78] 492 415

Chokecherries, serviceberries, gooseberries, and bullberries collected in the fall and dried for winter use were transported in buffalo calfskin bags in the pockets of "double-bags" on pack horses. (See p. 116

---

[77] Grinnell (1923, vol. 1, p. 248), who considered willow backrests luxury items unknown to the Indians before the acquisition of horses, said the Cheyenne carried them rolled in compact bundles on horseback. A Kiowa informant said that tribe generally carried bedding on top of a pack horse's load. [171]

[78] The Kiowa also employed the parfleche primarily as a meat-carrying case. The Cheyenne (Grinnell, 1923, vol. 1, p. 244) used them primarily for meat, berries, and roots. James (1823, vol. 1, p. 212) wrote of the Omaha, "The meat, in its dried state is closely condensed together in quadrangular packages, each of a suitable size, to attach conveniently to one side of the pack saddle of a horse," suggesting that the parfleche was used by that tribe for transporting meat in 1819. [171]

714 291 with grass to give greater warmth to the feet. Figures 27 and 28 illustrate the summer and winter costumes of Blackfoot horse raiders.[19]

Summer or winter, horse-raiding parties setting out on foot were careful to carry along supplies of extra moccasins. Each man was responsible for his own footgear. Blackfoot moccasins of buffalo days were of the soft-soled variety, which usually withstood but 2

714
291
411
302
415
482
532

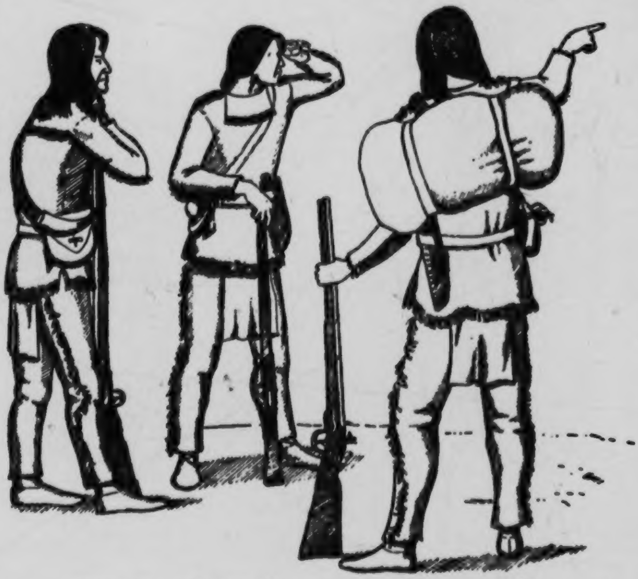


FIGURE 27.—Blackfoot horse raiders in warm-weather dress.

714 291 days of walking over rough country before they needed repair or replacement. Female relatives generally gave each warrior several extra pairs of moccasins, as well as awls, sinew thread, and extra pieces of skin with which to make repairs en route.

---

[171] [19] The blanket coat was a favorite winter garment of warriors among neighboring Upper Missouri tribes. Boller (1868, p. 290) mentioned Hidatsa-Mandan preference for white blanket coats. Kurz (1937, pl. 34 lower, and pl. 46 lower) illustrated the blanket coat worn by Assiniboin and Chippewa (?). The original sketchbooks of Charles Wimar, in the City Art Museum, St. Louis, include several good representations of this garment, as seen by that artist among Indians of the Upper Missouri in 1858.

714
291
411
302
415
482
532

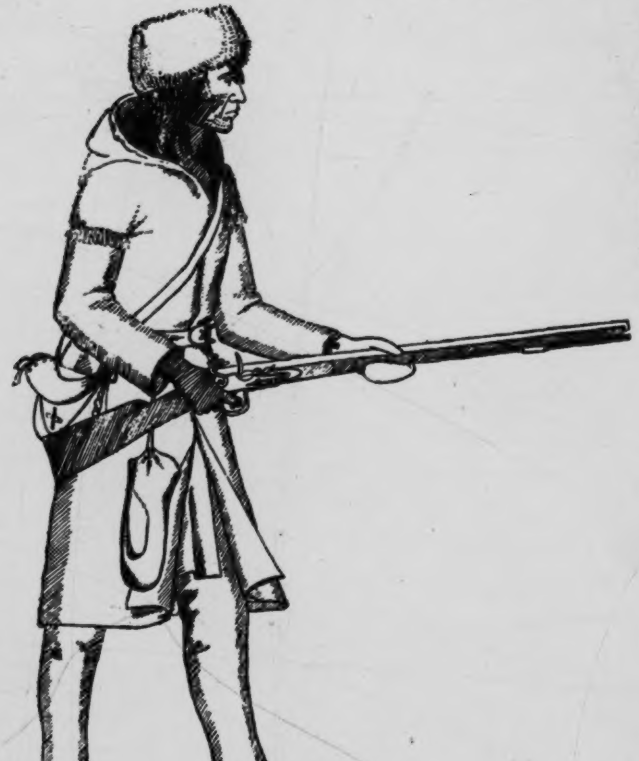
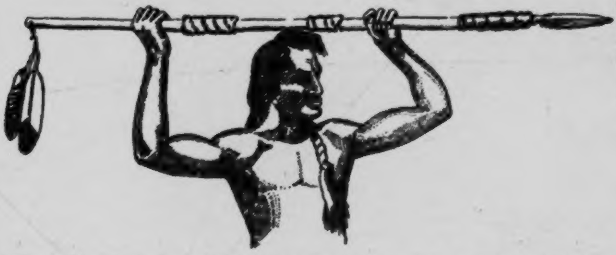


FIGURE 28.—Blackfoot horse raider in winter dress.

WEAPONS

Members of horse-raiding parties carried no shields, lances, or war clubs. Their weapons were bows and arrows, guns, and knives. The knives, carried at the waist in rawhide sheaths, were sharp and heavy enough to cut firewood and timber for temporary shelters. They served as axes as well as knives, useful in skinning and cutting up animals for food, cutting loose picketed horses from the enemy camp, and as weapons for hand-to-hand fighting if necessity required. 411 [714]

a small party of "Archithinue" warriors with "Bows and Arrows, & 726
bone spears and darts." Informants described the war lance as 5 or
more feet in length, consisting of an iron head 6 inches to 12 inches 411
long, bound to the end of a wooden shaft. At intervals the shaft was [237]
wrapped with otter fur to serve as grips, and pendent feathers were
attached to the end of the pole. Warriors criticized others who used long lances, saying they were cowards.[43] By grasping the shaft with both hands the warrior brought it down with a quick, oblique downward stroke, which combined thrusting and swinging. The weapon could kill or cripple an opponent if skillfully used (fig. 29). Informants said the lance was last used in warfare by the Piegan in their battle with the Gros Ventres and Crow in 1866.[44]



[532] [237] [302]

FIGURE 29.—Method of wielding the lance by a mounted warrior, Blackfoot.

War clubs, generally carried under the warrior's belt at one side 411
when not in use, were of several types. Although both wooden and elkhorn clubs were used by the Blackfoot in my informants' youth,

---

[43] Weasel Tail was told the Crow had a similar attitude. He cited the instance of a brave Crow warrior taking the long lance of a fellow tribesman, breaking it in two and returning it to him, saying that half that lance was sufficient for a courageous man. [171]

[44] The literature reveals that southern Plains tribes made more extensive use of lances in mounted warfare than did the Blackfoot. Direct contacts with Spanish-Mexican soldiers, who were trained and skilled lancers, may have encouraged greater use of this weapon by those tribes. Pfefferkorn (1949, p. 146) observed that the Apache, who raided into Sonora in the middle 19th century, used many lances taken from slain or captured Spaniards. He noted the Apache could "guide the spear more skillfully when they are on foot than when they are mounted, for, because they are not practiced in delivering the thrust except with both hands and raised arms, they cannot manage the reins of the horse at the same time, and hence often miss the mark." Yet Pike (1810, pp. 10–11), writing of the Apache use of the lance a half century later, observed "they charge with both hands over their heads, managing their horses principally with their knees. With this weapon they are considered an overmatch for the Spanish dragoons single handed, but, for want of a knowledge of tactics, they can never stand the charge of a body which acts in concert." These descriptions show that the Apache employed the lance as did the Blackfoot, using a two-handed, overhand thrust that probably was a survival from the Indian method of lancing in pre-horse times. It is apparent the Indians did not derive their technique of wielding the lance on horseback from the Spaniards. Burnet (1851, p. 236) claimed the Comanche used the "javelin" with great dexterity on horseback ca. 1820. Emory (1857, vol. 1, p. 89) noted that Comanche and Kiowa, raiding into Mexico in midcentury, left their guns behind and depended "alone upon the lance." [171]

Piegan and Shoshoni before the former obtained horses. He men- 714
tioned that the Shoshoni shields were fully 3 feet across, and those of
the Piegan, similarly employed to hide the entire seated warrior from
the enemy, must have been of about the same size. However, the
shields used for the Blackfoot in the period of mounted warfare were
nearer half that size, suggesting that the use of horses in war influenced
the reduction in shield size. My informants said Blackfoot shields 714
were made from the thick rawhide of the neck of the buffalo bull,
shrunken over a fire to a thickness of a half inch or more, trimmed into 778
circular form, and ornamented with painted protective designs and a [281]
border of eagle feathers. In native belief the shield's power resided
primarily in the medicine paintings and the blessings bestowed upon [532]
the shield by medicine men when it was made. However, it was [237]
sturdy enough to stop an arrow and to deaden or deflect the force of a
ball from a muzzle-loading flintlock. The horseman carried the shield 714
on his left arm (if he was right-handed) in such a way as to cover
his vital parts, leaving his left hand and right arm free to handle his
offensive weapons.

Although Bradley (1923, p. 258) termed the shield "an indispensable
part of every warrior's equipment," informants said that poor men
did not possess them. It cost at least a horse to obtain a shield,
ceremonially blessed by medicine men. In lieu of a shield the poor
man sometimes carried a buffalo robe (with the hair) folded several
times, over his left arm. Bradley (ibid., p. 258) learned that the 714
American Fur Co. at one time attempted to introduce polished metal
shields among the Blackfoot. This action "was opposed by the medi- 177
cine men, who would thus have been deprived of an important source
of revenue, and the superstitious feelings of the Indians induced them
to prefer their own which alone could undergo religious dedication
and enjoy the favor of the Great Spirit."[47]

EARLY USE OF PROTECTIVE ARMOR

Shimkin (1947 a, p. 251) found that the modern Wind River Sho- 714
shoni referred to the Blackfoot as "Hard-clothes (armor) people."
Wissler reported Blackfoot traditions "implying that buckskin shirts [101]
of two or more thicknesses were worn as protection against stone and
bone points" (Wissler, 1910, p. 163). Weasel Tail cited a tradition 714
regarding Blackfoot use of long shirts, reaching below the knees, made
of three thicknesses of buckskin in fighting battles during the pre- 175

---

[47] The use of a rawhide shield by the Spanish horsemen of old Mexico may have encour- [171]
aged Plains Indians to employ the shield as a weapon for mounted men. However, there
can be no doubt that the Indians were familiar with the rawhide shield before contact with
Spaniards. Pfefferkorn (1949, p. 291) described the Spanish soldier's shield of the period
1756-67 as "egg-shaped" and made of three or four layers of rawhide riveted together.
The Plains Indian shield was circular, of a single thickness of shrunken buffalo rawhide.

PICTOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION OF WAR HONORS

703 Successful warriors were privileged to picture their war honors on
532 their buffalo robes, lodge linings, or lodge covers. A warrior might
call upon another man more skilled in painting than himself to execute the pictures. On the whole the Blackfoot were much less interested in the aesthetic than in the symbolic qualities of their recordings. As Wissler has noted, the taking of a picketed horse was sometimes illustrated merely by a representation of a picket pin, while horses taken in an open fight were portrayed by geometric symbols of horse hoofs (Wissler, 1911, p. 41, figs. 4, 5). When horses were portrayed in the old days they were crude, stiff figures, which Lazy Boy aptly likened to the forms of the bent willow horses made as children's toys (pl. 12). They were always painted in profile, and generally in solid colors without outlines. The color was that of the captured horse depicted. Red paint signified a bay or sorrel, yellow a buckskin, blue a blue horse, black a black, etc. Pintos were first painted black, then white spots were added. The figures were exe-
[413] cuted in earth paints. Willow sticks about 4 inches long, "pointed at
one end like a pencil" served for brushes. Informants believed the
532 more detailed horse figures painted on skins in the 1880's and later
177 years at the request of white men were the work of Indian artists
whose styles had been influenced by the art of white men.[38]

THE BLACKFOOT WARRIOR IDEAL

702 Individual participation in either horse or scalp raids was always voluntary. Yet so great was the value placed upon warlike deeds in Blackfoot culture, and so obvious were the rewards of successful theft of enemy horses, that few able-bodied young men refrained from participation.

702 When a boy was born it was customary for his father to hold him
up toward the sun, and pray, "Oh Sun! Make this boy strong and
703 brave. May he die in battle rather than from old age or sickness."
As he grew older the boy's father and other male relatives pointed out to him the most distinguished warriors at the Sun Dance encampments and recited their deeds of valor to him as an encouragement to the lad to emulate their worthy actions. Ambition to distinguish themselves served to minimize young men's fears of the hazards of warfare.
702 Certainly the warpath offered the surest road to fame. As one
554 elderly informant said, "A young man's best way to get his name up
was through war."

---

[711] [38] Blackfoot paintings of horses never evidenced the lively action and decorative quality of the outlined, polychrome figures rendered by Teton Dakota and Cheyenne artists (Ewers, 1939, pp. 32–35). In recent years Victor Peplon, a Blackfoot artist, painter of the murals in the Museum of the Plains Indian at Browning, has been recognized among the number of capable young Plains Indian painters.

237
413
301
● 532

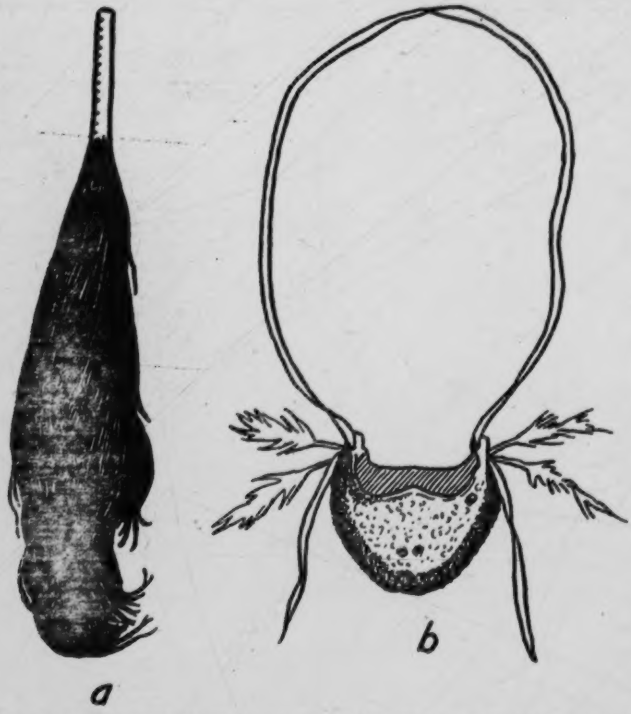


FIGURE 30.—Objects made of horse materials, Blackfoot. *a*, Horsetail asperger used in sweat-lodge ceremonies; *b*, horsehoof necklace worn by a weather dancer in the Piegan Sun Dance.

237
386

USE OF HORSE MANURE

The manure of a newborn colt was used as a yellow paint rubbed over the sinew back of a bow or on arrow shafts. It dried hard and shiny, like glue, and would take a high polish.[70]

---

[171] [70] Wilson (1924, p. 146) reported the use of this substance as an arrow paint by Hidatsa boys.

524
857
532

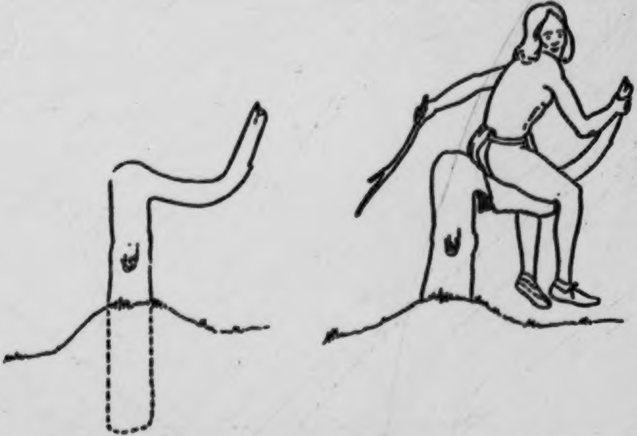


FIGURE 32.—Construction and use of a child's hobbyhorse, Blackfoot.

Lazy Boy said that by the time Blackfoot boys were 10 or more years of age they abandoned play with toy horses for the more serious and responsible activity of tending their families' horse herds. Girls also had little time for such play after they were called upon to help their mothers with household chores. 883

At the Heart Butte Sun Dance encampment on the Blackfeet Reservation, Mont., in the summer of 1944, I watched three small boys, aged about 10 years, playing at bull dozing and calf roping in imitation of these modern rodeo events. In the game of calf roping one boy played the part of the calf, another the horse, and the third the rider. The horse carried the rider after the "calf." When the rider roped the "calf" he jumped off and bound the "calf's" hands and feet together with a small rope (pl. 12, b). In the game of bull dozing the rider attempted to grab the "steer" around the neck and shoulders and wrestle him to the ground. Such play is of recent origin, of course. However, in spirit it is akin to the "horse play" of Blackfoot children in buffalo days. 857

HORSE RACING

David Thompson wrote of the Piegan ca. 1800, "They have also sometimes horse racing, but not in the regular manner; but bets between individuals in running down animals, as the Red and Jumping Deer, or the killing of so many Cow Bisons at a single race" (Thompson, 1916, p. 359). It is possible Thompson had not been in Blackfoot encampments in late summer, the traditional horse racing 541 [525]

A [See category 857, p. 358-K--Analyst]

winter, in whose honor the ceremony was given. Nearly all the 796 other witnesses were relatives of this woman or of the two male assistants to the cult leader, both of whom had also been sickly that winter. 755 I was the only white person present.

The room in which the ceremony was held was roughly 12 feet wide by 25 feet long, extending in a general north-south direction. Wallace Night Gun, the cult leader, sat on the floor in the center of the south end of the room. He was flanked by members of the cult, 6 in number, and one medicine-pipe owner who had been invited to attend. They formed a wide arc facing north. In the center of the west wall stood the wood stove, and opposite it on the floor in front of the east wall sat the wives of the cult members. Witnesses were provided with chairs ranged in two rows at the north end of the room.

The horse dance ritual consumed more than 7 hours, beginning at 9:30 p. m. While the leader began to open his medicine bundle on the floor in front of him, one of his two assistants, both of whom 796 were middle-aged men learning the ceremony, began the construction 755 of the ceremonial altar on the floor about 3 feet in front of Night Gun. 532 The assistant first spread a square piece of cloth on the floor and emptied a sack of fine gray earth upon it. Following the leader's instructions he smoothed the earth into a flat circular area about 30 inches in diameter with a cylindrical red-painted stick, 7 inches in length, from the leader's bundle (pl. 16, *A*, *f*^A^). He then carefully picked out all the bits of stone remaining in the earth. Next, the leader told him to draw the outline of a square in the earth with the stick. He marked out a square a little over a foot on a side and ran a line in a north-south direction down the center of the square dividing it into two equal rectangles. He then extended from each corner of the square a zigzag furrow in the earth more than 6 inches long. Next he made a small depression in the earth about 4 inches north of the square. Night Gun requested the second assistant to take a live coal from the fire in the wood stove and place it in the depression. This he did with the wooden fire tongs shown on plate 16, *A*, *c*.^A^ Then he placed sweetgrass on the coal to make a sweet-smelling smudge. Night Gun then handed the first helper a packet of charcoal which he 796 sprinkled evenly over the rectangle comprising the west half of the square so as to blacken it completely, and extended black lines in the 755 two zigzag furrows on the west side. Similarly he colored the east 822 rectangle and the two zigzag furrows on that side with red earth 532 paint. Next Night Gun handed the assistant two red and two black plumes, and he inserted them upright in the four corners of the square, beginning with the northwest corner (black) and continued in a clockwise order, i. e., northeast (red), southeast (red), and southwest (black).

A [See category 778, p. 358-0--Analyst]

796 755 ●532 [822]

Construction of this ceremonial altar was slow and deliberate. Wallace Night Gun told me Wolf Calf had explained to him that he had been told how to make the altar in one of his dreams. It was important that it should be made in just that way for every horse dance ceremony. Night Gun said the red rectangle symbolized day and the black one night. The zigzag furrows represented "the thunder's lightning." The plumes were also required by Wolf Calf's dream. Wolf Calf used to give them to persons who requested his help. Hence they were renewed from time to time (pl. 16, *A*, b). A The completed altar appeared as sketched in figure 33.

796 755 252

While the men rested, the wife of one of the cult members began to cut up three beef tongues on the floor near the center of the room. In front of her was a smudge in a tin pan. She made two passes with one hand toward the smudge before drawing longitudinal black lines with charcoal on each tongue, followed by the drawing of similar lines in red paint on each. Then she cut each tongue into small pieces each about 2 inches square. Wallace explained that only a woman who had been given this power could cut the tongues. If no such woman was in attendance at a horse dance, the leader would paint the face of one of the cult member's wives and instruct her in the ritual of tongue cutting. At any later ceremony that woman would be privileged to cut the tongues.

796 755 302 782

While this woman was at work, Night Gun called the young woman who had been in poor health, and for whose benefit the ceremony was given, to come to him. She knelt before him, as he uttered a prayer for her welfare. Then he painted her entire face and a band about one-half inch wide around each of her wrists with red paint, applying the paint with his thumbs. Next he prayed for and painted each of his two assistants and the owner of the medicine pipe bundle who was present. All of them I knew had been sickly that winter. The aged medicine pipe owner had been treated by several white doctors. (He died in the fall of 1947.)

Night Gun later told me it was customary for those who were blessed and painted to give him presents either before the ceremony or just prior to the painting. Unless the leader was satisfied that he was well paid he would not proceed with the ceremony. If satisfied, he instructed the other cult members present to remember these givers in their ritual prayers. The leader might also call upon any other witness, not a member of the cult, to come forward to be blessed. That witness need not pay for the privilege unless he was so disposed. Painting gave him the right to attend future horse dance ceremonies. Through witnessing the ceremony, listening to the songs, and studying the ritual he might eventually desire to buy into the cult.

A [See category 778, p. 358-0--Analyst]

9: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1955 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

796
755
532 ●

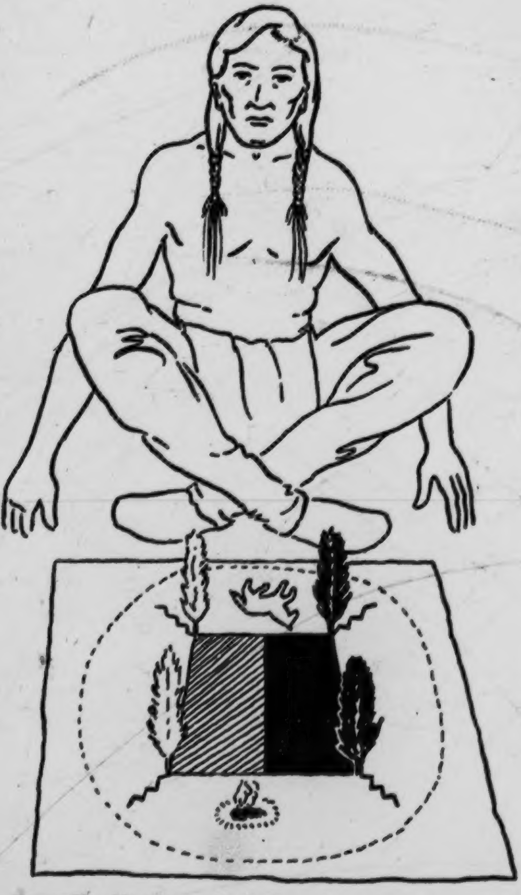


FIGURE 33.—Altar for the South Piegan horse dance ceremony.

Before the painting was finished the leader's second helper, seated on the floor northwest of the altar, began preparing tobacco for the cult members. He placed his knife on the smudge near the altar, then shaved a plug of commercial tobacco and mixed it with dried bearberry leaves (a common Blackfoot smoking mixture). The cult members then passed a pipe, consisting of a plain stem and a small black- 796 755 276

Then came the ceremonial climax. Wallace Night Gun, the leader, 796 covered his head with a blanket and sang three songs. Then, pipe in hand, he prayed to the spirits of Wolf Calf's horses, Sitting-on-a- 155 Hill and Gone-in-Different-Brush, the horses that had given Wolf Calf his secret power. Night Gun then took from his bundle the mane and chestnut of Wolf Calf's sacred stallion and prayed for the sick who had requested the ceremony. Then, as other cult members drummed, he rose and danced, holding a braided rawhide rope, noosed at one end, and a whip over his wrist. Both were taken from his bundle (pl. 16, *B*, *b*, *c*).^ Three times as he danced he made gestures toward the little rawhide horse in front of the altar as if to rope it, holding the rope in his right hand. Then he repeated these gestures with his left hand, and again with his right hand extended. Night [535] Gun danced in place, always facing the altar.

The leader then sat down and called upon the tongue cutter to ask if the tongue soup was ready to serve. Receiving an affirmative reply 796 he began to dismantle the altar. First he picked up the rawhide 155 horse and wrapped it. Then his first assistant removed the plumes from the altar, one at a time, handed them to him, and he wrapped 532● them. Finally he asked for volunteers to destroy the remainder of the altar. His first assistant and one of the cult members stepped forward with blankets wrapped about their waists. Night Gun gave each 796 of them a bit of horse medicine which they chewed and rubbed on the 155 soles of their moccasins. The leader told them, "Now, dance up to the painting three times; on the third time step on it and smash it down 535 flat." In accompaniment to the beating of drums, the two men danced 532 side by side toward the altar. Twice they retreated, rearing backward like skittish horses. Then they boldly advanced with pawing steps, stepped upon the altar, turned their feet upon it and destroyed the painting.

Next the leader addressed the women sitting on the floor opposite 796 the stove. Two women rose, each with a cup in hand, and danced toward the kettle on the stove, which had been boiling for hours. 155 Twice they retreated. The third time they placed their cups in the 262 kettle. The leader then told them to place three pieces of the tongue in a cup and to set it in front of him. With a stick covered with red paint he speared a piece of tongue, prayed for the sick woman, and gave her the first piece. In succession he removed the other pieces and gave one to each of his assistants.

The leader then instructed the women to take the earth that had composed the altar and the remains of the smudge outside, pray to them, and bury them where people would not step. Next he picked up the painted rock, prayed no one would be hurt by stepping on a rock

^ [See category 778, p. 358-0--Analyst]

796 755 262 on the way home and that none of their horse's feet would be harmed by rocks. He gave it to one of the sick men and told him to take it to a stream on leaving the house, pray to it, and throw it into deep water. Then the tongue soup was distributed to all those present. Having consumed it, they went home.

796 In many respects the horse dance may be regarded as a typical Blackfoot ceremony. Wissler (1912 a, pp. 248–271) has pointed out that singing, drumming, dancing with sacred paraphernalia, praying, the passing of the pipe, face painting, the recognition of taboos, and the following of strictly formalized and prolonged ritual patterns were common characteristics of Blackfoot bundle ceremonies. 796 ●532 Even the employment of dry-painted altars appeared in other important bundle ceremonies (ibid., pp. 255–257). R. N. Wilson (1909, pp. 16–20) in his detailed description of the use of a dry-painted altar in the Sun Dance ritual, noted that this altar was destroyed before the [822] medicine woman's party left her lodge. In that painting black symbolized night, and yellow day.[illegible]

796 801 Aside from the horse symbolism characteristic of the horse dance, the most distinctive feature appears to be the repeated and consistent employment of the ritual number 3. To my knowledge this is the only Blackfoot ceremony in which that ritual number occurs. In fact Wissler regarded 4 as the ritual number of all Blackfoot ceremonies, including the horse dance (Wissler, 1912 a, pp. 110, 247). In this detail his account of the ceremony is in error.

USES OF HORSE MEDICINE

791 756 The powers of Blackfoot horse medicine men, as explained by informants, were many and varied. Not only were they credited with the ability to control the health and actions of horses but they were thought to have been able to influence the movements of buffalo and to cure and aid the activities of humans.

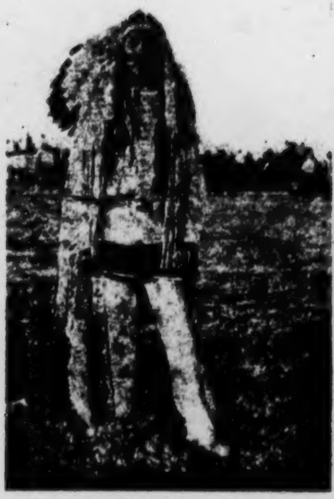
231 789 Horse medicine was most commonly employed in the treatment of sick, injured, wounded, or exhausted horses. Curing of sick horses generally involved the administration of medicine by nose or mouth as a part of the ritual. Owners of valuable horses generally entrusted their treatment to experienced horse medicine men when these animals were ill. The medicine men were paid for their services.

Three Calf recalled that Wolf Calf frequently was called upon to doctor horses that were staggering and near death. Wolf Calf rubbed his medicine on the horse's nose, back, and kidneys, then shook its tail four (three?) times. If the horse made no move Wolf Calf told the owner there was no hope for it. If it moved it would get well.

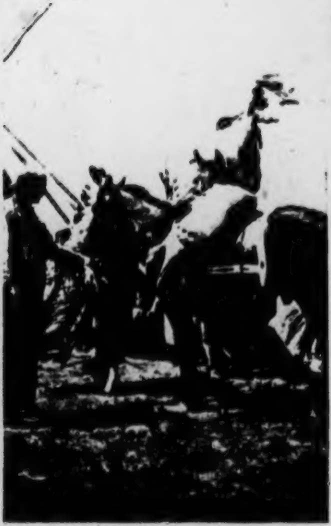
[1711] [illegible] Wissler (1912 a, p. 257) has pointed out the occurrence of dry painting among the Dakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho of the Plains, as well as among the Southwestern tribes.

PLATE III

531
292
535
[492]

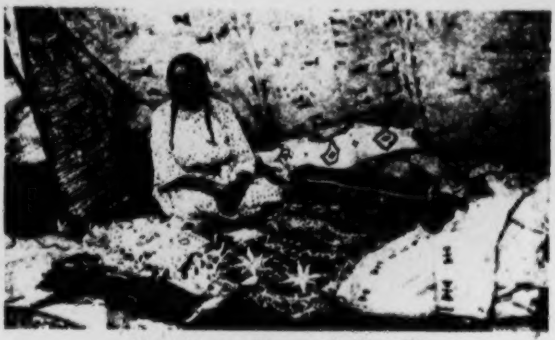


FAVORITE CHILD READY FOR THE OWL DANCE



MOUNTED ON A PAINTED HORSE, THE LONG TIME PIPE ON HIS BACK

353
291
531
532
352
302



HEAD CHIEF'S WIFE IN PAINTED TIPI

[p.44-c]

346 The tree was debranched and carried (by wagon, in later days) to its
824 place of erection. All could help in raising the center pole, and while it
796 was going up everybody sang songs of rejoicing and fired guns into the air.
Then certain societies were chosen to gather branches for use in completing
[178] the lodge. In recent times, among the North Blackfoot these duties have
[575] fallen to the Prairie Chicken and Crazy Dog societies. They return on
horseback, holding the boughs erect and singing songs of joy.

[823] The parade traverses the camp sunwise and enters by the west gate (Fig. 17).

CREEPING JUNIPER

Juniperus horizontalis Moench

824 Creeping juniper (Fig. 18), called sik-si-nou-koo ("black round object (berry)") in Blackfoot, is a common plant of the plains. Although it is strongly aromatic, it was not used as incense; however, there were other uses for its branches and berries.

824 The Holy Lodge dancer of the Sun Dance performed upon a carpet of
796
[784] juniper branches. It was forbidden to spit on the covering; instead, one
[237] had to lift the branches and spit under them. An Okan dancer held the wing
[292] of an owl in his left hand and a branch of juniper in the other. One
informant said that, in addition to carrying the branch, some dancers wore
headpieces of juniper berries; the headpiece had seven berries representing
[532] the Bunched Stars (Pleiades). (The same stars are portrayed in tipi designs.)
Sprigs of creeping juniper were also used symbolically to decorate the altar
of the Marten-designed tipi.

[533] Although there does not seem to have been any song directly associated
with the creeping juniper, there was an indirect reference in the songs of
[292] the Weasel-tailed suits. These suits, which were fringed with white weasel
[237] tails, were considered to be very powerful and had to be transferred just

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 36]

575 we have found
824 fir needles in the initiation bundles of the Horn Society.
778 We were told that the needles were mixed with the dry paint to make it smell better. Fir needles also were chewed and then sprayed over the Horn [783] ceremonial containers to purify them.

[783] Fir needles were used as incense during the transfer ceremonies of the Black Spring tipi design and the Bear Medicine Hat bundle.

PUFFBALLS

Lycoperdon spp.

824 The prairie puffball (a fungus) figured in Blackfoot religious life. The Blackfoot name for it is ka-ka-toos ("less powerful"), which implies that puffballs are stars fallen to earth during supernatural events.

[776] There is a story about the woman who married Morning Star and had a child by this supernatural being. When she returned to earth with the Natoas bundles and her child she was directed by the star-personage to keep her baby from touching the ground for fourteen days. She managed all right until the day she went for wood and left the child in the care of a grandmother. The grandmother was careless, and the baby touched the ground. It turned into a large puffball and returned to the heavens as the Fixed Star (North Star), plugging the hole left by the woman when she pulled out the Holy Turnip.

[782] [775] [372] [342] [532] Lycoperdon and other fungus, Polyporus, were used as incense to keep ghosts away. They were also included in the Firelighters bundle of the Horn Society for use as a kind of punk to light a fire easily. On certain painted lodges (for example the Otter lodge, shown in Fig. 20), the small circles at the base of the tipi represented the puffball (not lakes as is commonly thought), which insured fire to those within.

000 LUPINES

Lupinus spp.

342
773
532

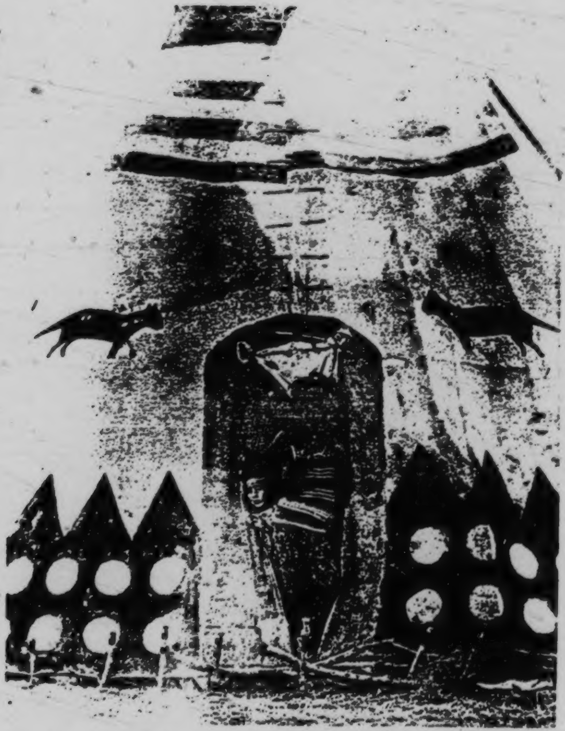


Fig. 20 -- Otter painted lodge of the Blood Indians, showing the Fallen Stars (puffballs) Lycoperdon sp. around the base of the lodge. Photo courtesy of J. Dawson.

778 824 INDEPENDENT BUNDLES (CONTINUED)

[755] Shaman's bundles

[714] Shields

[342] Bear shield

[532] Thunder shield

Never-Sits-Down shield

Ghost shield

Weasel shield

342 532 778 824 Tipis (painted lodges). Those lodges having flags with them are starred. Certain designs had ceremonial doors which were transferred separately. This list is not complete. There are many variations and combinations of many of these designs. Certain designs would use more than one kind of incense.

Bald Eagle design*

Wolverine design*

Otter design*

Half-yellow Painted Otter design*

Black Otter design*

Bear design

Black Buffalo design

Buffalo Head design

Hoof design

Fisher design*

Marten design*

Big Rock design

Underwater Monster design

Kit Fox design*

War Lodge design

Thunder Lodge design

Rattlesnake design

Crow design

Elk design - Litho spermum ruderale (Elk food) is used as incense during the transfer ceremony.

Middle-painted design

Beaver Lodge design

Skunk design

Cougar design

Half-black and Half-red design

White-tailed Deer design

Raven design

Deer design

Horse design

Prairie Chicken design

Crane design

Own design

Bullrushes design

Human design

Hailstone design

All-painted design

Antelope design

Mule design

---

*In this and other societies the plural indicates that the bundles are alike.

778

INDEPENDENT BUNDLES (CONTINUED)

824

342 Moon design

532 Half-yellow design

- Mountain Sheep design
- Yellow Mink design
- Winter-painted design
- All-stars design
- Big Circle design
- Striped design

778 Head-down design

824

575 Fish design

- Rib design
- Gnawed design
- Sun design
- Black design
- Blue Star design
- Downward Star design
- Red Striped design
- Eagle Trap design
- Yellow Thunder design
- Wave design
- Loop design
- Four Tail design
- Arrow design
- Pine Tree design
- Spider design
- Butterfly design
- Swallow design
- Badger design
- Weasel design
- Coyote design
- Wolf design
- Goat design
- Mule Deer design

SOCIETY BUNDLES

- Black Seizers Society
  - Black Seizers medicine pipe
  - Wolf-collar bundle
  - Crow headpiece bundles*A
  - Red Seizers bundles
  - Coyote bundle
- Braves Society
  - Bear-belt bundles
  - All-white Braves bundles
  - Willow Braves bundles
  - Black Braves bundles
- Bull Society
  - Bull headdress bundles
  - Buffalo-scalp headdress bundles
  - Straight-up headdress bundles
- Catchers Society

A./In this and other societies the plural indicates that the bundles are alike.--Analyst/

BIRTH CONTROL

824 In the matter of birth control, the Blackfoot practiced it in two ways.
842 Conception was thought to be avoided through the use of a special ceremonial
778 [847] bundle and abortions were performed with the aid of an herbal brew. The
[791] former required the services of a diviner who professed the power to prevent
conception while the latter was an event that could be accomplished by the
mother alone.

[126] Several of these anti-conception bundles, constructed between 1880-1930,
[791] have been collected and the authors reported of at least fourteen more on
the reservations of the Blackfoot, still being used by elderly diviners,
all women.

[301] There is a consistant pattern of bundle contents (see Figs. 27 &28);
[237] otter-skin wristlets each with an incised bone bead, the design representing
[386] [532] a snake; yellow ochre in a skinbag; and a quantity of pulverised plant
material in another skinbag. An exception to this pattern is the bundle
[291] collected by Ewers which contained a beaded, snake-shaped belt and lacked
[301] wristlets.

824 A woman seeking conception control would approach a diviner for
778 instruction in the use of the bundle. The diviner would, for a fee, use her
771 842 bundle on the patient or make one for her. Without going into the details
[302] of the ceremony, we should note that the major part of the ritual involves
the ochreing of the body from the head down to the navel and from the feet
[301] to the knees, therby isolating the reproductive area. The wristlets were
[784] worn for a prescribed period during which time the patient was enjoined to
[825] observe certain taboos. The ceremony was usually performed in the spring
when the snakes emerged from hibernation.

18: Wissler E-5 (1903-1912) 1913
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

~~575~~
561
796
237
302
●532
292
411

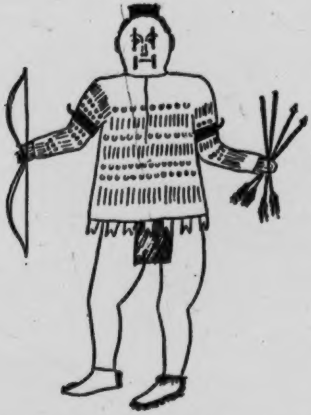


Fig. 1. Regalia of a Bear Shirt in the Pigeon Society. The wide belt of bearskin is not visible. From a sketch by Big-brave.

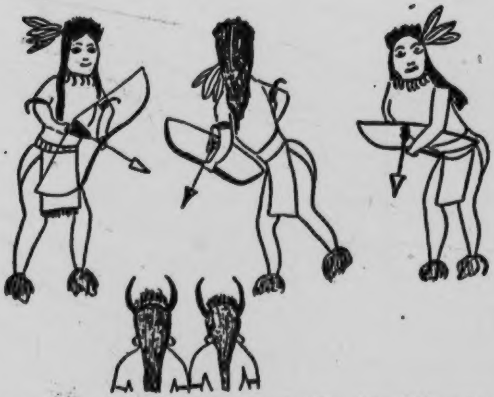


Fig. 2. Regalia of the Yellow Pigeons. There are four of these in the society, of which three are shown in the sketch. Drawn by a Piegan.

561 575 796 The two leaders sit at the west side, while toward the center, facing east, are the drummers. When all are in place the leader gives a signal, the drummers make four passes with the drumsticks and strike once, upon which all in unison give the call of the pigeon. (Some of our phonograph records show this to be highly realistic.) This is repeated four times. Then the songs of their ritual are begun.

[532]
[535]

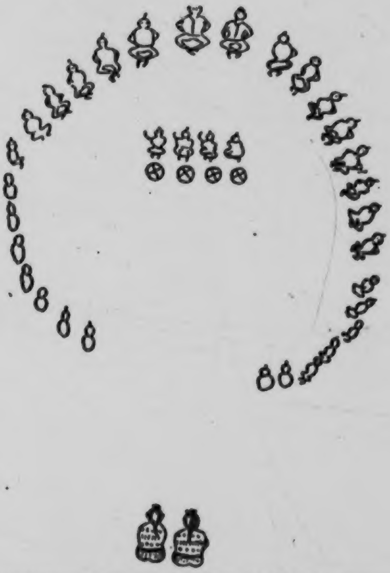


Fig. 3. Sketch showing the Position of the Pigeon Society in a Ceremony. Drawn by a Piegan.

An informant says that at the beginning of the ceremony everybody is seated, all singing and beating time on their bows with their arrows, the two [237] bear shirts as well. This pair, unlike their representatives in some other societies, do not rest their bows and arrows on buffalo chips and sage grass. [535] In the dance the bear shirts and the yellow pigeons do not dance around sunwise, but in the opposite direction and around the other members, bunched up in the middle. It seems that the bear shirts give the signal for the danc-

18: Wissler E-5 (1903-1912) 1913
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

formed by combining several covers. The members of the society did not live in this tipi or stay there so far as we could learn. At other times they may make a practice of regularly meeting at the tipi of a member, frequently that of willow brave, where they dance and hold other ceremonies as may be desired. At the close of each ceremony they return to their own homes, however. 561 575 796 [346]

When food is brought out for the dance feast, it is set down by the willow brave. Then the bear braves come forward, growling, but as they are about to eat, the black braves croak like ravens. Then they retreat, but return to eat. When they have finished, the others eat. At any time the bear braves may meet the returning hunters and take what they choose. They go out accompanied by two braves, bearing a tipi pole, upon which the meat they seize is strung. 561 575 [796]

561
575
796
535
532

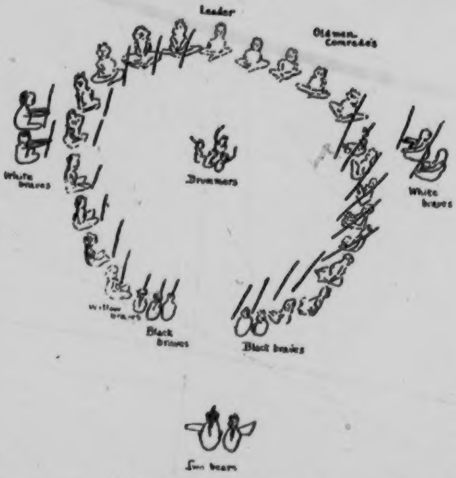


Fig. 6. Sketch showing the Positions of the Braves in a Ceremony. Drawn by a Piegan.

The mosquitoes usually buy into this society, though anyone may so join. The majority are married men and probably range in age from twenty to thirty years. Grinnell considers these warriors of the first class; but on this point we have no data save that they are to be distinguished from the foregoing societies as married men. It was said that after marriage a man [432]

(Fig. 7), consisting of a narrow strip of skin with bear ears and two small 561
horns (bear claws) attached. At the top, the hair is arranged to suggest 575
the cropped hair of the analogous pair in the pigeons. They wear shirts 796
made of white cloth which reach the waist, are fringed around the bottom [292]
and have short sleeves with long fringes. On the forearm, just below the [237]
sleeve, a narrow strip of bearskin with a bear claw attached is worn. The 561
shirt is painted red on each shoulder. A beaded belt, breech cloth, mocca- 575
sins, a belt full of cartridges and a knife, make up the costume. For paint- 796
ing they use the bear-face, that is, red ground with black marks down from [292]

[531]
561
575
796
292
237
302
531

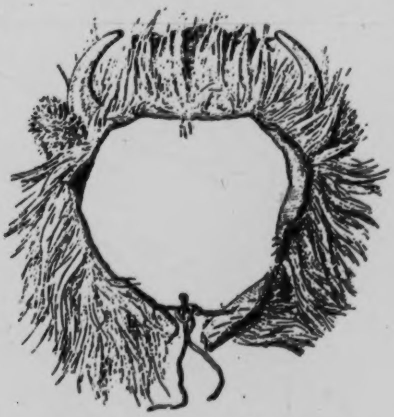


Fig. 7 (50-5730). Headdress for a Bear-all-brave-dog.

[532] ●

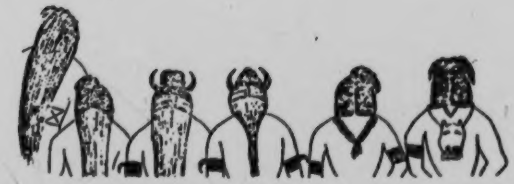


Fig. 8. Sketch showing the Costumes of the All-brave-dogs: the Leader on the Right, the two Bears in the Middle. Drawn by a Piegan.

[531]
[237]
[411]
[302]

all-brave-dogs. This is the only case known in which such substitution 561
was offered or in which the woman became a member of the same standing 575
as the single men comrades. When the society is marching around the 796
camp the women may follow in the rear and may sit behind their husbands
during other parts of the ceremony. It seems, however, that a woman may 535

[532]

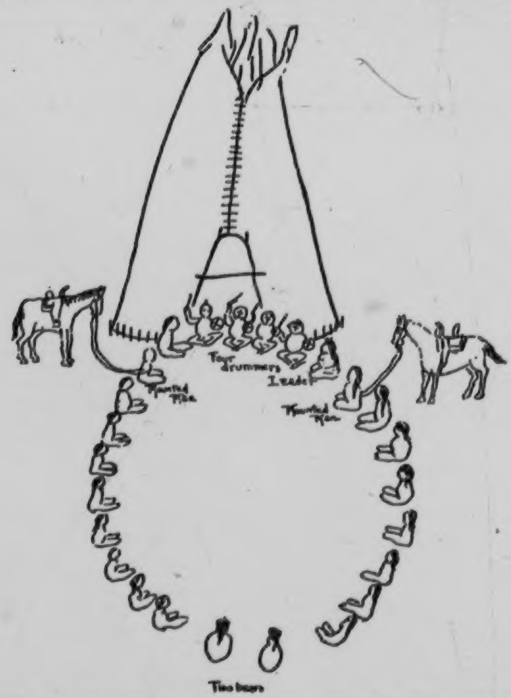


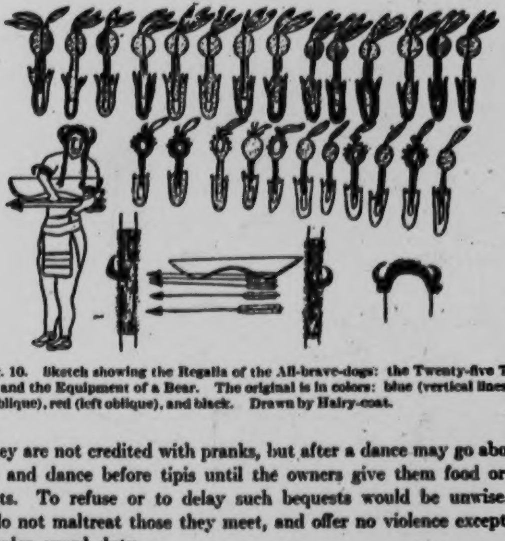
Fig. 9. Sketch showing the Formation of the All-brave-dogs before the Tipi of a Head Man. Drawn by a Piegan.

rise and dance with her husband at certain parts of the ceremony, if she so desires, and may even take his rattle in her hand and perform evolutions with it. This seems quite likely, since similar practices are found in the rituals of various medicine bundles (Volume 7).

could be chosen for this service. Here the society meets. The formal 561
dance is out-of-doors where the men sit in a circle (Fig. 9). 575

When they dance, they rise in their places. The mounted men ride 796
around, forcing the dancers to the center. Then they pretend to ride them 535
down, upon which dancers who have dismounted enemies, seize them by the
feet and gently unhorse them. Then the two riders join in the dance.
This is done but once.

They seem to have some ceremonies in their tipi. They have a number 561
of songs. In one they say, "It is bad to live to be an old man." The latter 575
means that to die in battle is preferred. At the end of each song, they shake 796
their rattles above their heads and shout. Four drums are used. 533
[539]



561
575
796
534
237
411
292
302
532 ●
531

Fig. 10. Sketch showing the Regalia of the All-brave-dogs: the Twenty-five Types of Rattles and the Equipment of a Bear. The original is in colors: blue (vertical lines), green (right oblique), red (left oblique), and black. Drawn by Hairy-coat.

They are not credited with pranks, but after a dance may go about the 561
camps and dance before tipis until the owners give them food or other 575
presents. To refuse or to delay such bequests would be unwise. Yet [431]
they do not maltreat those they meet, and offer no violence except when
on regular guard duty.

The members usually buy in from the braves. Since all the rattles are 561
supposed to be different, the transfer really consists of the purchase of a 575
particular rattle which is regarded as a ceremonial object or bundle as described 432
in Vol. 7. While it is usual for the entire society to sell out at the 424
same time, our informants state that nevertheless a rattle may be purchased [778]

Drums are used, but no whistles. 561

The faces of the women members are painted like those of the men. 575

The formal ceremonies were usually held early in the morning, "Because 796
the buffalo get up early in the morning and go down to drink." Out-of-doors
they sit in a circle, each man's wife, or corresponding woman member, sits 535
directly behind him. The men dance in pairs, holding hands with the free [534]
hand on the hip. (Fig. 12.) All the pairs face the same way, except the [825]
leaders. The latter always keep in the reverse direction. The dancing is

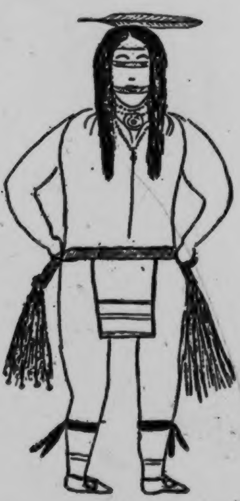


Fig. 11.

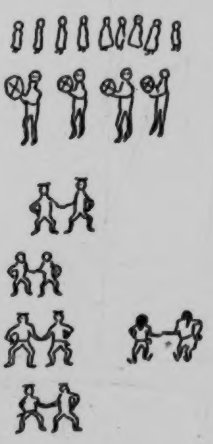


Fig. 12.

561
575
796
535
237
292
302
532

Fig. 11. Sketch showing the Costume of a Front-tail.
Fig. 12. Order of Dancing for the Front-tails. Drawn by Big-brave.

said to be in imitation of the buffalo. The four drummers come behind 561
with the women, who assist in the singing. After a dance, they rest and 575
smoke; this is repeated four times. When they are about to begin, the 796
drummers strike four times and at each all shout, "Ho-o-o-o!" Before 535
each rest there is one shout. It will be noted that the members carry
nothing in their hands.

The transfer of membership is well described in Mr. Duvall's notes 561
obtained from Big-brave:— 575
796
432

THE RAVEN-BEARERS.

561
575
The organization consists of:—

Leader (1)	Raven-bearers (40 to 100)
Assistant leader (1)	Pipe keeper (1)
Black-raven-bearers (1)	Drummers (4)

561 The leader carries a long red stick, trimmed with a strip of red cloth, to
575 which feathers are fastened. His head is thrust through a slit in the back of
796 a coyote skin. The head of the coyote is still attached. For a headdress he
[292] wears a single tail-feather. His face bears the coyote painting (p. 398).A
There is no special costume, he usually wears his best clothes. According
[237] to one informant the leader is said to have worn about his neck the
[531] skin of a raven. One was collected on the Blood Reserve (Fig. 13). The
[302] wings have been decorated with strips of porcupine quill work and from the
beak hangs a strip of red flannel, probably to represent the tongue. We were
[532] also given a peculiar necklace made of imitation bear's claws carved from
buffalo horn. This was also stated to have been worn by the leader. Other informants claim that the bird was worn only by the black-raven. According to White-man, the leader wore a coyote skin around the neck with pendant feathers in bunches, consisting of six eagle feathers and one crow feather each. The end of the crow feather was cut square. A rattle was also carried by the leader.

[531] The assistant leader carried a staff similar to that borne by members,
[302] except that it was entirely red. Otherwise his costume was similar to that
of the leader, except that in painting he wore a red band across the eyes and one across the mouth.

[531] The black-raven-bearer has a staff trimmed with black cloth, but fringed
[237] with human hair. According to most informants he paints his face over with
red (though some maintain blue), marking down with the tips of the fingers
[302] and dotting the forehead and cheeks with white spots to represent the
raven's excrement.

[531] The raven-bearers carry sticks trimmed with alternating pieces of black
and red cloth (Fig. 14), bearing feathers and bells.[1] They paint their faces
[302] red with a pair of small white spots on the forehead, cheeks, and chin.

For the ceremony they sit in a circle with their sticks on end. As songs
[535] are sung, they shake them to sound the bells. When dancing they carry
their robes on their left arms and hold their sticks up in front, inclined forward. The drummers stand, as for the front-tails.

---

[1] Maximilian, German ed., 578, gives a drawing of this emblem.

A. [See Category 116, p. 398--Analyst]

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 395]

796 request for the transfer of the catchers pipe. He must also give the owner
432 a horse at this time. The next day the transfer ceremony begins, requiring
276 four days. Each day the bundle is opened and the ceremony just described
778 performed. At present the purchaser is required to pay ten head of horses, blankets, clothing, etc., but in olden times, five head of horses were all they
[435] paid. (Vol. 7, 159.) An informant states that the two catchers pipes were formerly quite peculiar and did not resemble the other pipes. Now, however, the rituals are much the same which he attributed to the fact that they had been transferred many times and that each owner tended to add or modify the ritual according to some vision or dream.

561 The tomahawk men dressed in plain painted buckskin suits, but wore
575 buffalo robes with beadwork at the two upper corners to which tie-strings
[292] were attached. In the middle of the robe was a large beaded cross. The function of the tomahawk men is to stop fighting or other boisterous conduct
[531] in the camps. It is said that they are always certain to turn up whenever
[625] there is trouble around.

According to one informant, the tomahawk men carried symbolic axes
● [532] or hatchets carved out of wood while the members carried clubs covered
[411] with buckskin fringes and white beads, with buffalo and deer hoofs at the ends of the fringes to serve as rattles. In Maximilian's account of the
[237] leaders we find the following:—"They carry as their badge a wooden club
[531] the breadth of a hand with hoofs of the buffalo cow hanging to the handle." (117.) All the members wore buckskin suits and robes.

[796] In the formal ceremony they sit in a circle with four drummers in the middle. After the dance they go about the camp and tear up the robes of anyone they chance to meet. In the dance the pipe men dance first. As in most other societies the dance is repeated four times.

[625] When the catchers are sent in pursuit of a delinquent or misbehaving tribesman, he may escape them provided he can get into a position in which none of the members overcame an enemy. Thus, if he wades into the water on foot, he cannot be touched except by such members as have overcome an enemy in the water on foot. If he rides into the water he must be taken by a member who has dismounted an enemy in the water, etc.

THE BULL SOCIETY.

The oldest one of the series and the highest in rank is the bull society. It has been many years since the last ceremony and scarcely anyone alive now even saw their dance. Fortunately, the peculiar belief about warbonnets discussed elsewhere (Vol. 7, 110) tended to preserve the ritual.

All the war-bonnets we now have came from the bulls and in transferring the same 561
the songs of this society are sung. 575

The importance of this society may justify the full presentation of still [173]
another account by Big-brave:—

When Big-brave's father was quite a young man he saw the bull society. The 561
following is his account of it as told by Big-brave.

One morning the people moved their camp a short distance away, only the mem- 575
bers of the bull society remaining behind. When the camp was pitched an old man 796
called out, saying that someone must ride back and drive the bulls to the camps and to the water. One of the chief warriors taking some blankets with him rode back on a fine pinto horse to drive in the bulls.

The bulls all wore buffalo robes with the hair side out and painted with white 561
earth in spots to represent mud. Many wore horn bonnets while some wore buffalo 575
head wool bonnets which had small feathers fastened to them. One of the leaders 796
292
531
237
[532]

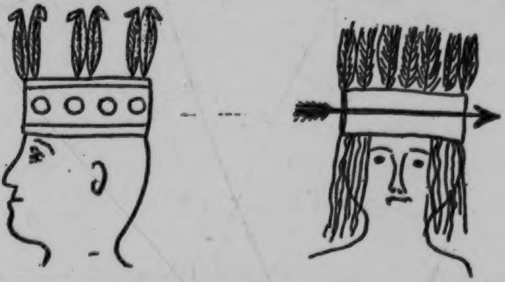


Fig. 17. Headdresses worn in the Bull Society. Drawn by Big-brave.

wore an otterskin cap with its edges decorated with bands of blue seed beads, while at four sides were quill-wrapped feathers decorated with bits of weasel tails at their tips. The width of the cap was two hands. Four pieces of some fungus growth
which is found on trees in the north were attached to this cap. The other leader wore [411]
a straight-up war-bonnet similar to those made nowadays with weasel tail fringe and feathers, but with an arrow about the length of the forearm placed horizontally across the front. It is called "the bonnet which was struck with an arrow" and after the bull society was discontinued was used a great deal in war.

Two of the members were known as the scabby bulls. They wore robes that were either poorly dressed or with the hair partly worn off to represent scabby bulls. They usually followed behind the others.

When the man riding the pinto horse approached the place where the bulls were, 561
he made a fire a short distance from them on the leeward side. He started the 575
fire with a flint and steel. As soon as the smoke reached the bulls, they all looked 796
in the direction of the fire, the rider mounted his horse, shouted four times and the
bulls rose shaking themselves and pretending to hook one another. Finally, they 535
[372]

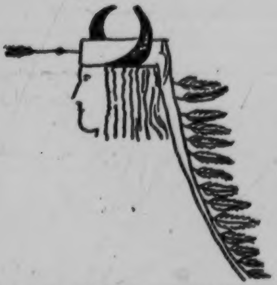
561 secured, Fig. 21.A It is of the head band type with a fringe of weasel tails.) Each
575 of these men carries a small bulb rattle with large wrist guard and streamers of ribbon
292 at the end. Their clothing is of no fixed form, but should be elegant.

Of lower position is a single man wearing a cap made of swan skin who also can
237 dress up to his means. His distinctive badge is a staff, or lance, about seven feet
531 long, painted yellow and sharpened at one end. To it is strung a strip of flannel in
796 sections of black and white. In the ceremonies this lance is planted in front of its
[533] bearer and is spoken of as the "mighty lance."

There are two mounted men, one on a black horse, the other on a white one.
[411] They are spoken of as the "ones who ride back and forth." The one on the black
horse wears a black suit and uses a black saddle. His face is painted red and he ties
[302] four owl tail feathers in his hair. The one on the white horse wears a weasel-tail suit and paints the face red. Sometimes he wears a white hat. Both men carry hooked lances about eight feet long. The one on the black horse carries an otter-wrapped lance with occasional bands of swan skin, while the rider of the white horse carries one wrapped with white swan skin with occasional trimmings of otter. Four eagle tail-feathers are strung on each.

One of the lay members carries the entire skin of a running fisher, stuffed and with brass buttons for eyes. The other members carry hooked lances also wrapped with otter fur and trimmed with swan skin.

[411]



[532] Fig. 20. A Headdress used by the Horn Society. Drawn by an Informant.
←

Four drums are used in the public dances which occur in the day time, in the open air about the center of the camp circle. The members sit in a three quarter
561 circle with the opening toward the east. At each end of the crescent is set up one
575 of the lances borne by the mounted pair. These are spoken of as the white and black
hooked lance respectively. The two leaders sit at the middle, or west part of the
796 circle, and the two rattle bearers to their left. The so-called "mighty-lance" is set
535 up inside in front of the leaders. Those of the members are planted in front of their respective seats. The wives of the various members sit just behind, thus forming a second circle. The men rise and dance, holding their lances forward, dancing around in a circle to their right while the two rattle bearers move to the left. Though they keep moving in the same direction they face now to the rear, now to the front. The drummers keep their places in the center. The women remain seated also. The two horsemen do not use horses here. Also each member is free to paint as he elects. The public is permitted to gather and look on.

561 The transfer, or ceremony proper, is a secret affair. First an enclosure is made by
575 setting up tipi poles and stretching over them enough tipi covers to form a screen.
The old members are now to sell out entire and in secret elect their successors. A
796 party then makes a round of the camp bringing in by force the men chosen, also their
432 wives.[1] As some of those chosen succeed in eluding their ceremonial captors, the
[346] hunt continues until the required number is secured.

---

[1] For the forced transfer see Vol. 7, 156.

A, [See Category 116. p. 414--Analyst]

takes the woman out-of-doors and proceeds with the painting. If properly done, 561
he spits a piece of turnip into her mouth. 575

The woman is then conducted back to her husband. As they come near the 796
meeting place, the conductor gives a faint signal, like
scouts on the warpath. Then he announces the name 432
of the husband after which the woman enters and spits [784]
the piece of turnip into her husband's mouth. This
turnip is evidence that she was properly painted. She
then squats over a smudge.

Some of the women are refused by the fathers, [558]
because they themselves are not of good repute or
because their husbands are not worthy men. In any
case, it is a disgrace to the husband not to have his
wife properly painted.

Our informant never went through this painting 561
ceremony. Some time after joining, a woman came 575
one night and kicked on one of the tipi poles saying 796
that she came to be painted. He told her that he 531
could not because he had not received the necessary 237
instructions. She then returned to her husband, who 532●
sent her to another man.

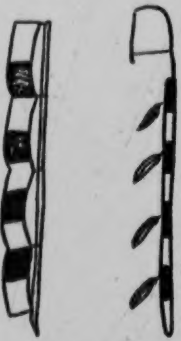


Fig. 23. Sketch of Standards used by the Horns. *a* A yellow painted Staff about seven feet long; *b* Staff carried by the mounted Members. Drawn by an Informant. 561 575 796 [292] [302]

The writer has a statement from Strangling-wolf that the members wear no clothes and paint
the entire body red. Some wear plumes at the
backs of the head, others wear war-bonnets of
several different forms. The lances, however,
are the main objects. They are usually made of
pine and cut thirty hands long. The leader's
lance is five hands longer. The hook is made of birch and tied with sinew. [237]
Around the places where the lance is to be held, bladders are wrapped, [824]
because no one should touch any of the other parts. Nine eagle tail-feathers
are used for each lance. The wrappings are of otter and swan skin. These [782]
are kept in bundles, but new sticks are required for each ceremony, the old
ones being offered to the sun (Fig. 19).A These are provided by certain men
and the fee is a horse in each case. When the stick is cut, prayers are [782]
offered and some tobacco left at the stump.[1] The whole camp must keep
very quiet while the stick is being prepared. The curved portion is made
and then bound on to the end of the staff. Then the whole is painted red, [531]
after which the wrappings and feathers are added.

There are three kinds of bonnets: the straight-up kind, one with horns, and one without.

---

[1] Flat-tail, a Piegan, once cut and prepared a kit-fox lance for the writer. He performed the ceremony properly, but later met with misfortune and death. It was common talk that all this resulted from his meddling with the power of the kit-fox. [784]

A.[See Category 116, p.411--Analyst]

561 The leader of this society has the say as to when the camp circle shall be
575 formed and where. He pitches his tipi within the circle.

When dancing, the lances are held out in front almost vertical. The
561 drummers sit in the center. The members dance around them sun-wise,
575 except those with the straight-up bonnets, each bearing a rattle. The latter
go in the reverse direction. The dance is closed by the leader shaking a robe
796 as if driving buffalo.

535 Mr. Duvall writes, "Near the close of the dance the man wearing the
bonnet with the arrow dances in the lead while all the other members follow
him. He attempts to break through the lines of the spectators who wave
him back with blankets and robes and shout. The dancers seat themselves
and then go through the same movements as before, trying to break through
the crowd, etc. At the fourth attempt the spectators allow the dancers
to pass, ending the dance."

[782] When the unwrapped sticks are offered at the sun dance a square rawhide
bag is tied on containing the paint and moccasins used in the ceremony.

561 A curious rule is that when a man sells his membership, he must not meet
575 the purchasers, they being as taboo as mother-in-law and son-in-law. Once
[532] when visiting the Blood there was great confusion in the writer's tent over
[784] the unexpected entrance of a new horn member. Like the mother-in-law
taboo, this can be removed by liberal gifts in a special manner.

[606] The belief is strong that horn members have power of life and death over
[431] all outsiders. A short magic formula is known to them with which the result
[754] can be had.

Running-wolf, a very able Blood Indian, is authority for the statement
561 that after the bull society became extinct the horns took over many of their
575 rites. The headdress of the horn leader is said to have been worn by the
173 bulls. His very aged mother remembered seeing the bull dance. He called
attention to the large part buffalo conceptions seem to play in the ceremonies
and origin myths, whereas the kit-fox of the Piegan has a different mythical
origin. One of our Piegan informants was positive that the buffalo did not
figure in the kit-fox ritual in any manner whatsoever. It will be noted that
this theory of Running-wolf is consistent with our accounts of the kit-fox.
On the whole, we believe this to be the most probable explanation of the
[554] differences between the horns and the kit-fox. In a way, this would also
account for the unusual prestige now enjoyed by this organization.

upon the staff for the prairie-chickens (Fig. 24). Along the staff is a fringe 561
of buckskin and a row of dew claws. (According to James Eagle-child the 575
staff is called the bee lodge.)

The lay members paint their bodies and faces red, with a single transverse [237]
stripe of black or white across the nose. They wear only robes, moccasins, [531]
and breech cloths.

All members wear an eagle claw on the wrist, painted yellow, and secured [302]
by a buckskin thong. [292]

In dancing, the organization forms in a circle, the leaders to the west, [237]
the opening to the east, and the drummers in the center. When dancing
out-of-doors a piece of rawhide is used, but for ceremonies indoors, drums 561
575
535
796
[534]
[531]

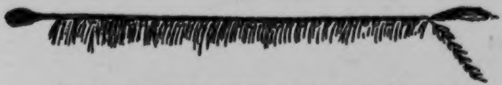


Fig. 24. Staff of the Bee society. Drawn by an Informant.

are used. The staff is borne by the first leader. All follow him, when he [532]
rises they rise, etc. After the first dance, the staff goes to the second leader,
then back to the first, etc. There are four dancers and seven songs. All
movements are made sun-wise. The leaders dance inside of the circle formed
by the members. At the end of each dance, all quickly squat in their places.

At the close of the fourth dance the leader shakes the staff causing the dew claws to rattle loudly. At once the members scatter and run about scratching people. If any of the members have been to war and entered the tipi of an enemy, they may go into any tipi and scratch at will.

The tipi of the society is pitched within the camp circle and is made by [346]
combining the covers of the tipis of the two leaders.

When moving camp the members watch the leader bearing the staff and 561
follow. 575

According to our informants the bees were older than the mosquitoes. [173]
This would give them higher rank as indicated in the list of Calf-child. We
were not able to determine how two societies so similar as the mosquitoes
and the bees came to exist, but think it a good guess that one of them arose as
a rival organization.

THE PRAIRIE-CHICKENS.

An informant states that the age for entrance in the prairie-chicken
society (ke'tuki iks) was eighteen to nineteen years. There are two leaders [422]
who seem to own the emblems of their office jointly. When the society [346]

561 meets, the tipis of the two leaders are joined to form a single shelter. Two
575 old men are taken in as drummers. There is no special costume for members
[346] but each carries a rattle and paints his face yellow with red between the eyes.
[302] The leaders carry decorated staffs. One of these is about four feet in
length, the lower half plain yellow, the upper, blue and adorned with feathers.
561 At three places is a wrapping of weasel skin to hold four eagle feathers
575 laid on the sides of the stick. From the top extend two more eagle feathers
796 in *y* fashion. The other staff is yellow and blue as before, but bears one
[531]
[237]

561
575
796
535
532

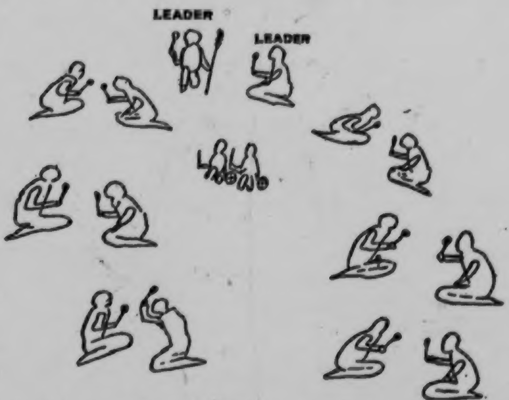


Fig. 25. Dance of the Prairie-Chicken Society. Drawn by an Informant.

561 erect feather, held by a wrapping of weasel skin, below which is a wrapping
575 of beads. We were told that in the transfer ceremony, the two leaders
796 jointly received the staffs, which is an unusual procedure.
[531] In the ceremonies of the society there are four dances at sunrise. The
[237] members number about eighty and sit on their knees in pairs in a circle.
[535] The leaders sit at the west side. The drummers sit in the middle and lean
forward and beat rapidly to make a noise like the prairie-chickens. The
two leaders get up and run around the outside of the circle and at their return
change places. The members then dance on their knees, throwing their
heads out at each other and change places. These evolutions are given four
times as stated above.

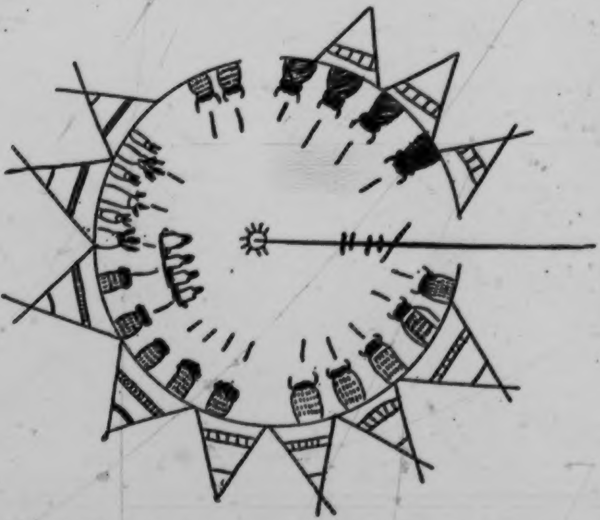
561 According to Calf-child the society was first organized when his father
575 was a boy and by his grandfather. Youths only were taken into it. The
173

There are six men attached to the society, but all the other members are women. Four of these do the singing. The remaining pair act as messengers and attendants. 575 796

The women are organized as follows: —

The snake bonnets (6)	The buffalo wool bonnets(×)
The scabby bulls (4)	The feather bonnets (×)

The tipi pole owner is one of the snake bonnets. Each woman has a red-painted backrest stick planted before her seat to support her headdress. When they sleep, they lie with their feet toward the center. Just to the west side of the center pole is a fire. When food is brought in and handed to members, they pass what is given them to members on the opposite side. Each member has an individual smudge altar before her seat. For these the grass is cleared from a small oblong. Along the sides next to the sitter are rows of buffalo chips covered with sage grass. Sweet-grass is used for the smudge. The headdresses must always be smudged four times before they are placed on the head. 575 796



575
796
346
353
532

Fig. 26. Diagram showing the Ceremony of the Ma'toki. Drawn by Mrs. Heavy-runner. The top of the sketch is north. The positions of the two doors are shown; to the west of the center pole sit the four male singers; behind these to the north are the six snake-headdress members, to the south the five *feather-headdress* members; south of the east door sit the buffalo-wool headdress members; to the north the *four* scabby bulls; the marks above the heads of members indicate sticks for supporting the headdresses when not in use. The triangular figures outside represent travois.

nights, during which time they are not supposed to sleep. No men are admitted at 796
any time and the six male members are sent home at night. It is said that the entire
night is given to hilarity. Joke and jest reign supreme. Some dress like men and 575
act out the part, give orders to a wife, etc. Some roll up blankets like medicine bun- 432
dles and hold mock ceremonies. The object of this seems to be that no one may go
to sleep.

The fees for buying a membership are a horse, a gun, and other property. The [424]
most expensive place is that of the tipi pole owner for which twelve horses and a
proportionate amount of other property are required.

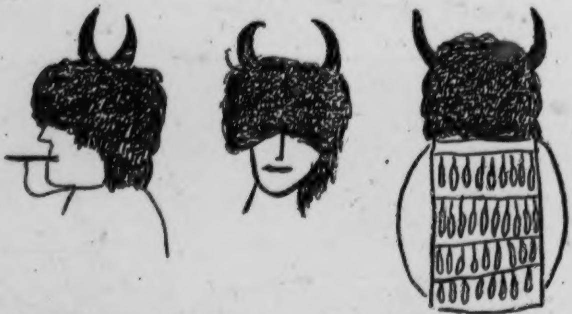


Fig. 27. Buffalo-wool Headdresses for the Ma'tokí. Drawn by Mrs. Heavy-runner. These are intended for different views of the same headdress. The top is heavily covered with buffalo hair while the skirt bears four rows of bird feathers. The wearers paint a circular white spot on each cheek and one on the forehead, with a cross in each produced by rubbing away the paint.

796
575
292
237
531
532
[302]

As to the transfer ceremony, we have not been informed, but have notes 796
on an interesting proceeding between the new member and the one she dis- 575
places. In the morning each new member goes to the one she purchased of, 432
her ceremonial mother. She enters the tipi, throws down her robe, places
her hands upon the mother's head, passing them down to her shoulders and
kisses her. By this the mother understands that she is to accompany her
daughter. The mother is conducted to the shelter, walking behind and given
a seat facing the center. The daughter then sits in front facing the mother.
Some red paint in a cup and some blue paint in a shell is provided. The [302]
mother then paints the daughter's face.[1]

---

[1] The following comment is by Mr. Duvall: — Our informant did not say whether the old members had to remain there during the whole day or not. The old members had to be there every morning and painted those who came there to be painted. The ma'toki were in charge when the camp circle was formed. It seems that they meet at the time of the sun dance. I am unable to find out whether they meet at the time of the tobacco planting.

Her husband belonged to the horns but refused to talk about them as it was said to be

794 ghosts to the place and said, "Let us all have a dance for four nights and restore this
769 man's life to him." They agreed, and after four nights, the man came to life again
and saw the ghosts, how they painted their faces, and how they dressed. One of
773 the ghosts said to him, "We will give you this dance. When anyone is sick or about
173 to die, have a dance, and he will recover." The man returned to his home. After
539 some time someone was very ill. This man gave the ghost dance, and taught it to
the people.

794 The dancers paint to represent skeletons, so it is said. The face and
769 exposed parts of the body are painted white, while around the mouth and
302 each eye is a bold circle of black or red. The effect is quite hideous.

794
769
778
237
824
531
276
532

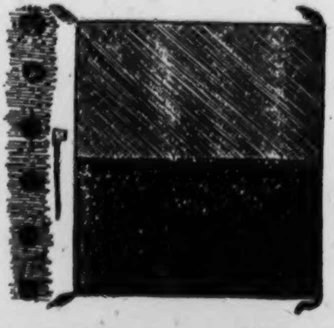


Fig. 28. Smudge Altar for the Ghost Dance. Drawn by Big-brave. The altar is about one foot square, the north half red, the south half black. Red and black plumes respectively are stuck up at the corners. At the west is a row of buffalo chips covered with sage grass. Between these and the altar lies the pipe used in the ceremony. Sweetgrass is used on the altar and the tongs should lie on the north side.

794 There are no particular regalia except a plume on the head, nor are there
769 any bundles. The ceremony has, however, its own peculiar ritual and
[292] songs. Women dance with the men.

[796] A dance rarely occurs unless some man makes a vow or formal pledge to
provide a feast and dance for the dead in return for some expected or realized
794 good fortune. At the ceremony his wife sits near the door and takes the
769 name of Yellow-woman. She paints her hair yellow and her face red with a
796 yellow band across the forehead. On her head, she wears a plume. A great
535 abundance of food is expected.

[769] The smudge altar is a large oval with the incense hearth at one end.
At the other is placed a small pipe and four plumes. According to Big-
[302] brave the altar was square, Fig. 28. One member is delegated to attend to
[778]

and paint their horses. Each marks on his horse the guns he has captured. 535
A mark is made with red paint to show that his horse was wounded or killed; 231
or the figure of a man is painted on the breast of the horse to indicate that a 531
man was once ridden down. The horses are also painted in white paint
as for war. The tail is tied up and beaded bridles with cross bar sticks, decorated with feathers, are used. Some of the horses have horse bonnets and bells around their collars.

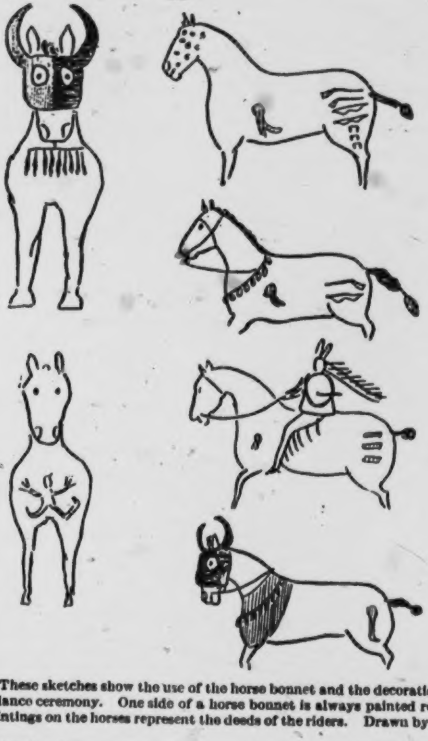


Fig. 29. These sketches show the use of the horse bonnet and the decorations of horses for the horse dance ceremony. One side of a horse bonnet is always painted red, the other blue. The paintings on the horses represent the deeds of the riders. Drawn by Red-plume. [532]

There are no restrictions as to who shall take part in the horse dance, 535
but usually it is the warriors who dance before going to war. The men dress [726]
[292]

721 neck of a buffalo hide. Heavy wooden lances were also used
[411] extensively by some tribes in horse days and may have been
[177] copied from Spanish models. Plains warfare but rarely involved
pitched battles, or, indeed, save where specific motives
for revenge existed, the serious reduction of the enemy's
strength. Horses, not killing, were the reasons for going 'on
the war-path'. A small party set out on foot to the enemy's
territory, taking only their weapons, sleeping robes and a small
store of dried meat. If possible they crept up to an enemy
camp, cut loose the horses and drove them off. Conflict
721 followed only if they were discovered or pursued. Among the
555 Blackfoot the capture of an enemy's weapons ranked highest
as a deed. Among some other tribes, where the counting of
[171] coups was more formally elaborated, the touching of an enemy
ranked first, with the capture of weapons and horses as subsidiary
deeds. Coups could, among some tribes like the Cheyenne,
be counted by several persons on a single enemy, and they
ranked in strict order of touching, irrespective of who actually
[532] wounded or killed him. These deeds, recorded in picture
writing on tipi walls and buffalo robes, constituted a sort of
heraldry. Whenever a man was called upon to play a part in
a social or ceremonial function he first recounted his deeds.

648 Alternating periods of friendship and strife were the relations
of the Blackfoot to other tribes, but, like other Plains tribes,
721 the Blackfoot had traditional enemies like the Cree, Assiniboine
and Crow, and also allies, such as the Sarcee and less permanently
the Gros Ventre, against whom the elders forbade the
[201] young warriors to raid. The frequent contact of tribe with
tribe, whether in war or peace, was facilitated by the development
of elaborate gesture symbols, or 'sign language', which
was uniform over wide areas, irrespective of the fundamental
differences in speech.

'Medicines'

554 Rank among the Blackfoot depended not only on military
778 prowess but also on the possession of 'medicines', that is, of
rituals, and the objects necessary for their performance, which
would ensure the success of some project or desire, be it health,
a journey, a raid, a hunt or another ceremony. The 'medicines'
[422] were owned by individuals and transferred from one to another
[432] for payments. These were, however, not primarily commercial
transactions, but their full consideration cannot be undertaken
here. The ritual apparatus was usually wrapped in bundles of
554 otter or some other valued skin. While most older men possessed
some medicine the owners of the 'medicine pipe bundles'
were the senior and most entitled to respect. On the rank of
their medicine depended the place at a feast, the order of speech

nary puffball, like those that grow all over the prairie. That 773 night she looked up and saw a new bright star in the sky.

After some time passed, this same woman made a vow to 539 put up a Sun Dance. Along with the other articles used by 778 the holy woman, she carried her sacred digging stick and a fresh tall leaf of the wild turnip. She taught the others the ceremony that went with them, and these things have been carried on to this day. In addition, she painted round circles [532] all the way around the bottom of her father's lodge, in memory of her little child. Most painted lodges now have these circles, and that is why they are called puffballs, or fallen stars from the sky.

A GRANDMOTHER WHO HAD THE POWER TO CALL GHOSTS

When my father was young he spent a lot of time with his 551 mother's brother, Willie Eagle Plume. This same man spent a lot of time with my husband and me in the last years before he passed away. His mother was named SikskiAki, which is the name that I am known by in the Blackfoot language. He gave my husband the name Natosina, or Sun Chief, which had once belonged to his father. Shortly before his passing he gave our youngest son his own name, Atsitsina, or Prairie Owl Man, to complete a trio of names that had been around him since childhood.

Willie Eagle Plume's father was also known as Eagle Plume. He was born around 1850 to a woman whose name, Otsani, can no longer be translated. She was one of several wives of a chief named Not-Scared-of-Gros-Ventre-Indians. Some early trader misunderstood her name, Otsani, and thought it was Old Charlie, which became her nickname for the rest of her life.

Otsani lived to a very old age, spending her final years in 791

Bloods. He owned a number of different medicine pipe bundles 793
and he joined the Horns Society many times. He lived to
be nearly a hundred years old, and he died not too many years
ago.

When I was just a little girl my father purchased a painted- 852
lodge design for me. The design was put on a new tipi for the
transfer ceremony. It wasn't a big tipi, it was just a little tipi, 532
big enough for kids to play in. My mother made it for me so [343]
that I could use it with my friends. They hired an old man to
conduct the ceremony so that I would be properly initiated for
it. My mother sat in the tipi with me, as my partner. I was not
the only little girl that was given such a tipi. There were a few
others.

My sister and I were then in boarding school. That was in 871
the days when they didn't even allow us to come home for the
Sun Dance. My mother came to the school and she put up the 343
tipi in the summertime. She put it up right by the school, and 857
nobody bothered it. She put in a small tipi liner that had
designs painted on it. She tanned some little animal furs and
she put them inside my tipi for rugs. She even made little bags
from rawhide and put them all around the inside, just like a
regular lodge. Sometimes on her way to visit us at the school,
my mother would stop at Long-Nosed Crow's [the trader
R. N. Wilson's store] and buy a lot of groceries. Then she
would tell me to invite all my friends to the tipi and she would
serve a big meal—all kinds of food and berries. Sometimes
even the nuns came over and sat in the little tipi with us.

The design on my tipi was very pretty. It was given to one 532
of the old people from the past, in a dream. The cover was
painted yellow, and it had four lines of colored circles going
from top to bottom. The circles stood for stars, and there was
a row of them at each of the four directions—east, west, north,
and south. I don't know how many years I had that tipi, but
it finally wore out and disappeared. I have never painted that

● 532 design on another cover, and right now I could transfer the design to somebody else if I was asked to.

852 I was also initiated to join with a medicine pipe bundle when I was very small. Each of those bundles has a man and a wife for an owner, and a child goes with them to wear the special topknot wrapping and fur headband that is kept with the bundle. That is what they transferred to me, and I sat right up in front with the main people, each time the bundle's opening ceremony was held. I have been around medicine pipe bundles all of my life, and I know all their songs and ceremonies.

551 Mokakin and I got married in 1921. His name means Pemmican, although today he is also known by his uncle's name,
778 Eagle Ribs. We were still very young when we made a pledge
to take that bundle called Backside-to-the-Fire Medicine Pipe.
We treated it very well. I was very scared to do something
wrong to it, there are so many rules and regulations to follow.
796 The ones who initiated us for it were the real old-time people,
so we were initiated in the old-time way. The ceremony took
a couple of days. They even initiated us for going to sleep at
night and getting up in the morning.

778 We lived very good by that medicine pipe bundle. I used to
take it outside every morning, before the sun came up, as was
782 the custom. I always had to start a fire in the stove so that I
could make incense before I took the bundle out. I watched it during the day so that nothing would happen to it while it hung outside. That is what those tripods with each bundle are for, to hang it from. But when the people started living in houses they just put up a big nail at the back, where the bundle can hang in the daytime. Then I made incense again before the sun went away, and I would bring the bundle back inside. I made incense once more before we lay down to sleep. That is when we really learned to pray. That is one reason why you have to make incense often for your bundles, so you will learn

to pray. Since then I have been praying steadily, and up to 778
this day I am still praying.

Sometime after we got this medicine pipe bundle for the 782
first time we were transferred a large tipi with a painted design. 342
It came from the Blackfoot division. It was the Yellow- 532
Otter-Painted Lodge. Later we also got the Half-Red-Painted
Lodge and the Yellow-Painted Lodge. Along with the painted 778
lodge I got as a child, I have owned four sacred lodges in my
lifetime. Each of them has its own powers and its own story,
and I can call on them in my prayers and get help that way.
That is our religious belief.

Mokakin and I have also joined the Horns Society several 575
times. First, we had that membership bundle called Has-a-
Rattle, which is one of the leading ones. These membership 778
bundles come from long ago. We went around with this bundle
for several years, and I treated it good, too, just like our
pipe. Then we gave up our medicine pipe to another family
that made a pledge for it, just like we did. Each time it was [425]
transferred, the new owners gave up their best horses, wagons,
sometimes cattle, blankets, money, and other valued property.
That was to show how sincere they are in taking over such a
sacred responsibility. In the past only the leading chiefs and [554]
their families took care of the medicine pipe bundles. My
father's father was a leading chief in the old days, and he became
one of the main medicine pipe men in the tribe.

Backside-to-the-Fire Medicine Pipe changed families several 778
times, then we made a vow to take it back again. The
first time we got it from Black Forehead and his wife, and this 425
second time we got it from Day Rider and his wife. After
some time we passed it on to Fred Weasel Fat and his wife.
This second time when we got the pipe there were not so many
old-timers left for the ceremony, so it was shorter than the
first.

In our old age we took Backside-to-the-Fire Pipe once

20: Hungry Wolf I-4,5 (no date) 1980
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

Learning to Camp Like My Grandmothers

178 THE WAY MY PEOPLE camp at the annual Sun Dance gathering
sure has changed since the time my mother was a young
[252] girl staying with her grandparents. For instance, I don't know
of anyone who still uses an open fire to cook all the meals on.
[493] And no one moves to the campgrounds with horses and wagons
anymore: everyone brings their gear by truck, and a few even
[342] bring along travel trailers to stay in. There are lots of bright,
[354] orange-and-yellow camping tents, and many people use propane
stoves.

342 When my husband and I first started camping at the Sun
Dance we wanted to do it in a very traditional way. My
532 mother helped me to sew a new tipi, and my grandmother
778 told us to paint it in one of the two designs that she and my
grandfather owned, many years ago. These tipi designs among
the Blackfoot are very ancient; they get handed down from
one family to the next. The tipi itself may wear out and be
changed many times, but the design always looks the same.
[533] It goes together with special songs, stories, and face paintings,
[538] and a family has to be initiated before they have the
[302] right to use these things. There is even supposed to be a medicine
bundle to go along with each tipi design, but most of

these have been lost over the ages. There are still several dozen tipi designs in use among the Blackfoot Nation. They are all considered sacred. 532 778

Modern tipi users are very concerned about the measurements of their tipis. Whenever such people see our tipi, at home or in camp, they always ask: "Is this an eighteen-foot lodge, or a twenty-footer?" It surprises them that Indian people don't rate their tipis this way. They might say: "This is a four-strip tipi, or a five-strip," referring to the number of canvas strips that went into making the cover. Most often Indian people just describe their lodges as being small, large, or real large. 342

Our first tipi was not real large. It had only four and a half strips of four-foot-wide canvas, one above the other, counting up the back of the tipi as it stood. There were only three of us to live in it at that time. My mother and I made it in about two days' time, and we used about one hundred dollars' worth of material. The work went quickly because my mother has made quite a number of tipis, and she uses her treadle sewing machine to do most of the sewing. People even come from other tribes asking her to sew tipis for them. She feels so honored and eager to please that she hardly charges anything for her work. This probably adds to her orders.

My mother uses another tipi for a pattern, when she starts to cut out the pieces for a new one. She prefers to use one that has been put up several times and has proven itself to be well shaped. Slight variations in measuring and sewing can make a big difference when you try to set the tipi up properly. Some tipis end up setting real well, and some do not.

We did all the measuring outdoors, on the open prairie by my mother's house. I still recall the day quite well, because it was typically windy and we had a hard time to keep the big pieces of canvas from flying around. We numbered the strips of canvas, then took them inside the house to sew.

days they lived in their tipis all year long, and the thick hides 342 kept them much warmer than our thin canvas would. Imagine being in a tipi in January, at forty below zero, with a blizzard blowing deadly cold through every pore and opening in your only shelter.

In the buffalo days of my grandmothers several of them 342 got together and helped each other with their tipi-making. 476 When one woman had all the necessary hides tanned and sinews prepared, she invited her friends and relatives for the work. She made a big meal and provided tobacco for smoke-breaks. Sometimes she got an old lady to pray first and paint [782] the faces of the workers, to ensure a well-made new home. [302] Most families got a new tipi cover every year, along with a new set of tipi poles from the pine hills or the forests near the mountains.

Some buffalo-hide tipis were quite small, and some were 342 quite large. Among my father's ancestors there was a famous chief whose tipi was so big that it was packed up in two sections. When they put it up they had to pin together both front and back, instead of just the front. He had a number of wives and many children, so there were plenty of workers to make such a big lodge and to put it up. His name, by the way, was Father-of-Many-Children. The band to which my family belongs is called the Many Children.

You might imagine how eager I was to try out my first 342 tipi after it was completed. But since we were going to have 532 a painted tipi design transferred to us, we had to paint that design on the tipi first. The new owners of a design can hire someone to paint it for them, or they can do it themselves, unless they are going to get the old cover with the design already on it. Usually the former owners have about worn it out, so they take it to a lake and sink it with stones, as required by tradition.

The design we were given by my grandmother is called the Yellow Otter Painted Lodge. The last time it had been used

342 on a tipi cover was years before my grandfather died, and I 532 never met him, so that cover was long gone. She said they gave a good horse and a lot of goods to the old couple that gave it to them.

I had one trying experience with our new cover before we even got it painted or put up. My husband and I spread it out on the ground by our home the night before the painting. We spent the last hours of daylight tracing out the designs, and we wanted to get an early start on the work the following morning. At that time we lived in an old log house down in Bullhorn Coulee, on the Blood Reserve. There were a lot of horses wandering around our part of the country, and some of them came to our house during that night. I think that they must have had a horse-dance on top of my new tipi cover, because it was just covered with dirty hoofprints when [152] we got up. I was so mad that I followed the examples of my grandmothers and said nothing. I got some bleach and warm water and I washed the whole darned thing.

We had a sketch of how the painted design was supposed to look, and we followed it precisely on the big cover. A mistake in the painting could have spoiled our first tipi, so we worked carefully. The top part of the cover was painted black, to represent the night sky, when the original owner had his vision. On the ears were painted pie plate-sized circles, in two different patterns, to represent two important constellations in the sky. At the back we left a space in the black sky for a large Maltese cross, to represent the morning star. Around the center of the tipi we painted eight otters, four males and four females. It is interesting that tradition requires female animals to be painted on that side of a tipi where the men sit on the inside (the north side), while male animals are painted on the opposite side, where the women sit. No one seems to know how this tradition came about, or why.

The main part of our tipi was painted yellow, to represent the sands along the beaches of streams where otters live. We

20: Hungry Wolf I-4,5 (no date) 1980
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

used commercial oil paints on this tipi, because the old-time 342 earth paints of my ancestors are scarce and hard to find, especially 532 certain colors, such as yellow. Around the bottom of the tipi we painted a wide black band with rounded projections, which symbolized the hills near the streams that otters live in. For this and the night sky we could have used charcoal mixed with grease and warm water, but we kept the painting uniform by using oils throughout. At the time we didn't know that this would make the cover twice as heavy as the original canvas. However, it also made this one of the warmest and most waterproof tipis around.

Before my new tipi was ready for camping I had to sew 342 the lining curtains that hang from the poles around the inside. I had no idea how important this job would be. As a result I just sewed together two long rectangles of canvas from what was left over after I made the tipi cover. Ponah and Mokakin loaned us an old one of these liners with pictographic drawings of war stories, so I figured we were all set.

By the way, you may be wondering why I say "my tipi." 422 One of our ancestral traditions is that the tipi and its household contents belong to the woman. If she splits up with her husband, he is left out in the cold, though he usually goes to stay with relatives or friends. The tipi design is transferred to [424] the husband and wife together, but the cover that it's painted on still belongs to her.

Getting the tipi poles to camp is usually the biggest problem 484 of the whole move. Those who are lucky enough to have a good wagon that can be pulled by a vehicle find themselves 494 imposed on a lot. Mokakin has such a wagon, and I've known it to pull six or seven sets of tipi poles to camp over a few days' time. Most poles are at least thirty feet long, and there are generally about twenty poles to a set, so that becomes quite an awkward and heavy load. Still, a number of people manage to tie their pole sets to the tops of their half-ton trucks and get them to camp—generally by the reserve's back

20: Hungry Wolf I-4,5 (no date) 1980
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

343
● 532
857
291

A little girl and her own miniature sacred tipi. This is about how my grandma Ponah must have looked when she was young and had her own tipi. (PHOTO: EDWARD S. CURTIS, GOOD MEDICINE FOUNDATION)

[p.170]

Introduction to the Sun Dance Encampment

Setting Up Camp

It was the middle of summer, the time when Sun 101
is closest to us and to our Mother Earth. It was a
good time to gather with friends and relatives.
The long, hot days were perfect for relaxing by a
tipi and visiting with others. On printed calendars
the year was 1972.

Within that summer camp one of our Peo- 122
ple's ancient Medicine Pipe Bundles could be seen 778
hanging over the doorway of a yellow-painted tipi
that had figures of otters drawn all around it. This [531]
was the tipi of my own family—and within it, our [532]
household.

To most of my friends I am Hungry Wolf, 123
though our Old People call me Natosina, or Sun 551
Chief. The first name was given to me long ago as 553
a reflection of some of my personal characteristics.
The second name was given me by my "uncle" [114]
when I became a Medicine Pipe Man. Natosina
had been the name he had inherited from his
father. All who carried this name were Medicine
Pipe Men and lived to old age.

My wife is SikskiAki, or "Black-Faced 551
Woman." The name was inherited from an old
relative and has nothing to do with her ap-
pearance.

[p. 3-A]

seventy-second Sun Dance Encampment, re- 553
minded us that he had taken on a new name to
celebrate reaching the status of Old Man. From [554]
now on he would be known by his late uncle's
name, PitachPikis, or Eagle Ribs. For most of his
life he had been Mokakin, or Pemmican, al-
though his many friends in towns and on other
reservations usually called him by his recorded
name, Pat Weaselhead.

We hung our sacred Bundle from its wooden 778
tripod at the rear of the space selected for our
tipi, in keeping with the traditions taught to us.
SikskiAki's dad was along to help us set up prop- 342
erly. It was not long before we had the four main
poles for our tipi tied correctly and raised into
place. Other poles were leaned against the crotch
formed by the tops of these four. With a strong
pole we lifted up the tipi's canvas cover and
fastened it down. Then we adjusted the poles,
tied up our inner lining, spread out our floor mats
and bedding, and moved in the rest of our sup-
plies of food, water, and clothing. In other parts
of the camp circle, tipis and tents were being set
up at the same time.

Ours was the second Yellow-Otter Tipi set 342
up in the camp. Mokakin's and Ponah's, next 532●
door, was of the same painted design. Their de-
sign had been transferred to them many years be-
fore by a man from the North Blackfoot division
of our People. Their canvas cover was so old that
the otters painted on the south side (male otters,
by tradition) had lost all their black paint and
were now only white outlines against the faded
yellow background. Sun shines on the land of the
Bloods from the south, as He travels from east to
west; the north side of the old tipi was not nearly
so faded. Mokakin remarked, "Those otters on
the south side look like a bunch of white-haired
old men! That's the last Sun Dance for this tipi.
Next year we use a new one, one with a different
design. Ponah is gonna make it up this winter and
I am going to paint it myself."

I asked which design it would have and he

said, "The half-red, half-yellow design. We got it 342
long time ago, too." 532 ●

It was a familiar story. We had just finished
making our own new tipi. Our old one, with another
design, had been too frail to stand for the 342
three weeks of the encampment, exposed to 532
winds, rains, and Sun on the unprotected Belly 424
Buttes. SikskiAki sewed the new cover, and we
both painted it with the red, yellow, and black of
the otter design. This particular design had belonged
to SikskiAki's grandfather, Joe Beebe. It [431]
had been given to him as a present by his first wife's brother. That brother was Old Weaselhead, Mokakin's stepfather. Joe Beebe had given him his favorite racehorse, with split ears, in return. The tipi was later transferred to a North Blackfoot man, and Joe Beebe bought it back when he married SikskiAki's grandmother. The canvas cover they used fell victim to old age, but the rights to use the design were saved from a similar fate when it was transferred to us by Grandma.

After our tipi was set up, we were invited by Harry Shade to have lunch at his lodge. It was a new white tipi that had been made by SikskiAki's mother just before the encampment. Harry Shade, or IshtapatauMachkan ("Running in the Back"), had planned to paint the lodge with the snake design, so that his old grandfather, Wolf Old Man, could transfer the rights to him during the Sun Dance. The rights were transferred as planned, but the tipi painting had to wait until later, since the family was preparing for the ceremony in which Mrs. Shade would become a member of the women's society known as the Motokiks.

Wolf Old Man was the leading holy man left 123
among our People, having spent most of his 115
ninety-four years giving spiritual leadership and
physical doctoring. By the Powers of our Old [793]
Ways he remained active and well, and by these same Powers, I was brought to him to become, in his opinion, the one who would carry on his Spirit

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

Enough of 262
his own teeth remained to allow him to chew his favorite food—meat.A He would have been content with a diet of meat and bread, and lots of water that he claimed helped stimulate digestion. [827] [271] Though he liked fruits and desserts, he was not overly fond of vegetables. Like most of our Old People of the long-ago, he did not eat fish, because they belong to the Underwater Spirits. Around his neck was his customary black scarf; 291 his feet were covered with moccasins. He was wearing his special dress moccasins with a blue-and-white geometric design beaded on them. [531] One of his canes was plain, while the other was carved and vividly decorated with paint.

When he finally spoke, he asked if we knew 124 the story of how things were in the beginning of the world. Of course we had read several versions of the traditional creation myth told among our People, but we didn't know his version and were anxious to hear it. He lapsed into silence, sorting out the story in his mind. We sat quietly so that he would not get the feeling we were impatient.

Although the heat of the afternoon was becoming very noticeable, 342 the brightness of the outdoors was greatly subdued by the yellow coating 532 ● of paint and the black silhouettes of the eight otters that circled the outside of our lodge.

The Old Man's voice began in a commanding tone:

HOW THE EARTH WAS MADE AND PEOPLE ORIGINATED

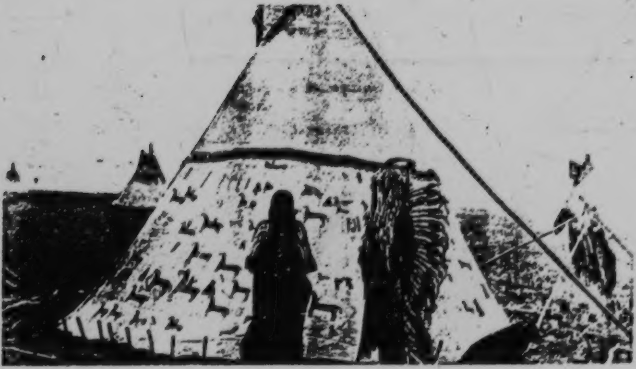
Oki, the first ones here were a man named Sun, 539 *a woman named Earth Woman, and a Dog. These were the first three that inhabited Earth. So that makes four. The man did all the hunting. He always cut open whatever he got and then went home. The woman was given just a limited time to go and get what he cut open. The man put a thong in his mouth, soaked it, and then put it down. The woman had to bring the food home before the thong dried. They lived in abundance.*

A, [i.e., Wolf Old Man, a nonagenarian--Analyst]

[P. 16-B]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

342
532



War Tipi in the Blood Sun Dance Camp of 1891. This is one of two traditional War Tipis among the Bloods. It is recognized by its circle of fringe, under which are the picture-writings of various men's exploits. (R. N. Wilson)

[P.17-B]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

moose hooves is tied to the stick. The hooves and 796
stick symbolize our Old People's main foods— 795
meat and roots. They also represent two of the 778
spiritual helpers who are said to have contributed [237]
their Powers to the original Natoas. The mean-
ings of these items were revealed in a dream to a [262]
Beaver Bundle man who kept the original Natoas.
The holy woman's sacred headdress is the [787]
most important item in the rawhide case. Like [292]
our other tribal Medicines of ancient origin, this
one is made up of things symbolic of the natural
world. The base of the headdress is a rawhide [237]
band of buffalo skin, shaped like a lizard. Plumes
and feathers of eagles and other birds are fastened [531]
to it so that they stand up. Skins of weasels are
attached so that they hang down, and an ancient
arrowhead hangs from one side. A tiny image-doll [532]●
stuffed with sacred tobacco seeds is attached to
the rawhide band to represent mystical Spirits [776]
known as the Little People. Back when our Old
People still grew sacred tobacco, the Little People
would mysteriously come and give it their Power
to be sacred.

Wilson made these observations during the transfer ceremonies of these sacred headdresses:

> *Simultaneously, the initiation rite was per-* 796
> *formed in '92 in all four of the lodges. I witnessed* 793
> *that in which three women were initiated at once*
> *in Running Wolf's lodge. The front had been* [346]
> *enclosed and poles of the lodge had been spread*
> *far apart and a second lodge pitched in front, so*

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 27]

[p. 26-A]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

The Medicine Tipis in Our Encampment

The camp was still coming together, and although 000
the big event, the transfer of Horns Society
memberships, was still a few days off, there were
now already more lodges in the camp than there
had been on the final day of last year's encampment.

Sitting out in front of our Yellow-Otter Tipi, 532 ●
we were visiting with Grandma under the large 342
umbrella, looking around the camp circle and
talking about our People's tradition of painting [124]
some tipis with symbolic designs.

In the long-ago, tipis with painted designs
could be found in the camps of most tipi-dwelling
people. Such tipis were very personal, expressing [787]
the dreams of their owners, and were usually destroyed
when the owner died. Among some tribes, [769]
painted tipis housed their chief or sacred Bundles,
but as these declined, so did designed tipis.
Although some tribes have painted their tipis in
recent years, these designs usually have no meaning
and often bear little resemblance to their traditional
counterparts.

Our painted tipis, however, follow a basic
style of ancient design, and are easy to recognize
and distinguish from the tipis of other tribes.
Originally each tipi's painting told a story and [778]
accompanied a small sacred Bundle, and while in
most cases the stories have been forgotten and the [178]

[p. 67-A]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

Bundles lost or sold, the painted designs on our 532
tipis are the same ones our oldest living People 342
saw when they lived in the circle camps as [778]
children.

In the days when the first white men came to [178]
visit our People, tipis were made of buffalo hides
and designs were painted with natural colors, usu-
ally various shades of our Mother Earth. From [822]
her comes the sacred red paint we apply to our
faces, bodies, and holy objects, as well as our tipis. [776]
The red paint represents our Earth Mother, the [778]
blood within our bodies, and also the color of our
Father, Sun, in the morning and evening.

There are many types and shades of red 386
earth, but only two kinds are used for sacred pur- 778
poses. One is *Nitsisahni*, or "real paint," which is
fairly bright red and the most commonly used
shade. The other red paint is called the "seventh [801]
paint," because it is most often used in Medicine
Pipe ceremonies where the number seven is
sacred. Darker than real paint, it contains a substance that gives it a greasy feel and a shiny appearance. The Old People say that if sacred paint is not gathered properly with many prayers and good thoughts, it will turn into plain dirt before it can be used.

Other sacred paint colors include black, usu- [237]
ally made from powdered charcoal; yellow, made [824]

[p. 67-B]

from a clay, though it used to be made from buffalo 386
gallstones; and green, made from a certain 778
type of algae. [237]
In the Old Days, these natural colors were
mixed with water and animal fat to form the [824]
paint that was applied to tipi covers. Brushes were 532
made from buffalo bones. The bone was cut at one
end, so that its pores were exposed to form the tip [237]
of the brush. These pores held the thick paint [413]
quite well. The natural paints had to be rubbed
into the lodge covers very thoroughly, or else they
would run with each rainfall. Even so, the natural
colors tended to fade very quickly from constant
exposure to the elements. Nowadays, we use the [178]
somewhat organic combination of oil paint and
linseed oil, which has proved to be effective and
durable.

Painted tipis are usually given up as an offering 782
whenever a new cover is made, as there should 532
never be two copies of the same cover. The old
cover is either offered to the Underwater Spirits 342
by sinking it with rocks into a lake, or offered to
Sun by leaving it weighed down by rocks out on
the prairie.

Nevertheless, occasionally two or more covers 432
having the same design can be found. In some
cases, they represent similar dreams by different 532
people. In other cases, they indicate a design not 342
ceremonially transferred but inherited, and probably [787]
looked upon as a family heirloom or coat-of-arms
to be reproduced in new tipi covers—usually [424]
by younger people unaware that they should not [428]
copy the design. And then there are those who
know better, yet copy original designs on new
covers and sell them to museums and collectors of
"Indian relics." Finally, so-called Indian enthusiasts
also contribute to the existence of multiple
copies of the same design, when they make painstakingly
precise but nonspiritual representations
of some old design for their own tipis.

The Spirit of the Otter has inspired more 532
designs than any other spiritual power. Our own 342
Otter Tipi was one of four similar ones at last [776]

summer's encampment. Four is a sacred number, 532
so it was good to see that many of one tipi design. 342
As all four owners happened to belong to the
same part of the camp circle, all the Otter Tipis [801]
ended up next to each other.

There are different types of Otter Tipis. All
have otters symbolically drawn on their covers. The [778]
Yellow Otter Lodge, or Tipi, may have only a [533]
small Bundle and a few songs. The Yellow-Otter-Flag has a great many songs and a Bundle that includes the decorated skin of an otter. This skin is known as the flag; it is tied to the end of a pole and suspended over the tipi to wave in the air.

According to our ancient traditions, this is 773
how the very first Otter Tipi came about.

539
532

THE OTTER TIPI

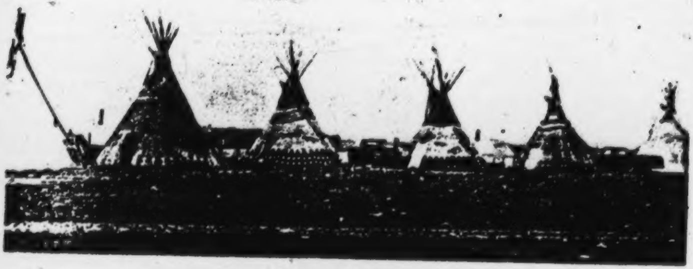
Long ago a young man went way up north into a country where our People used to live. He stopped by a lake, perhaps the Great Slave Lake, where he lay down to sleep and seek a vision. No dreams came to him while he slept, so the next day he built himself a raft out of the driftwood littering the lake shore. With a long pole, he pushed the raft away from shore, and then lay down upon it and again fell asleep.

While the young man slept, Wind pushed the raft far out into the lake, where Mink swam up to it. When the young man awoke, Mink said, "I have been sent to bring you to my relative's lodge. Follow me." The young man followed Mink into the water and they swam down to the bottom of the lake. When they reached bottom, the young man saw there a fine lodge, painted yellow with many designs. He heard drumming from within. Mink took him inside and introduced him to his relative, Otter. Otter was lying on a bed of tule reeds (a kind of bulrush or cattail) at the back of his lodge. He offered the young man the seat next to him, saying, "I have heard about you looking for holy Power around this lake. I sent my relative up to get you because

TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 70-1

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

342
532
361

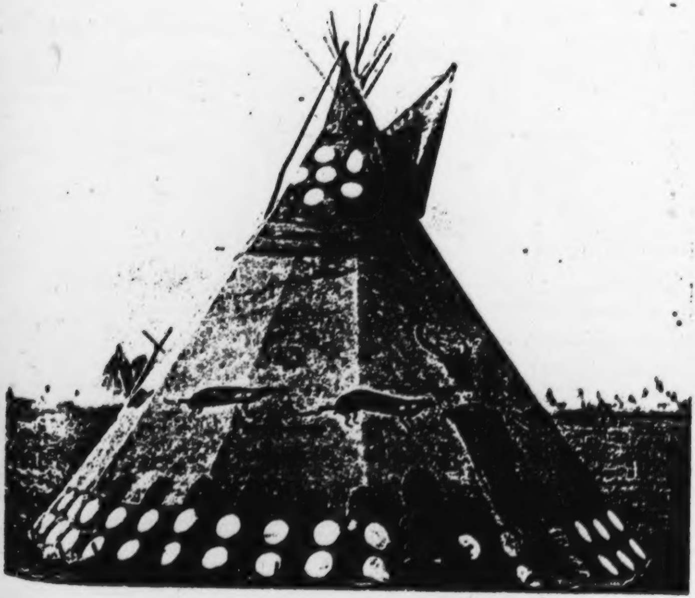


The four Yellow Otter Lodges during the 1972 encampment. The one on the left belongs to Many Grey Horses; the next one, to Philip Mistaken Chief; the next, to us; and the last, to Mokakin.

[P.69-A]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

342
532●

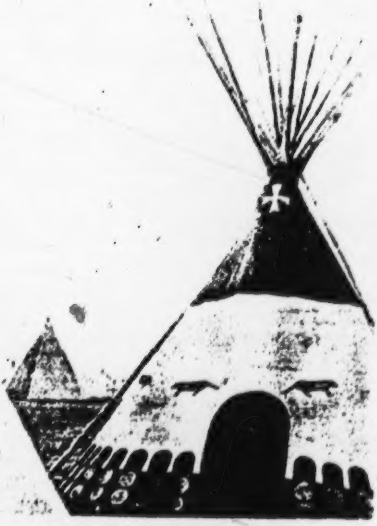


Yellow Otter Painted Lodge in 1891; another variation, with a buffalo head painted over the doorway. This one has two stripes painted beneath Night Sky, to represent the Milky Way. The six discs at the top represent the Bunched Stars, or the Pleiades. (R. N. Wilson)

[P.69-B]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

342
532 ●



The Yellow Otter Lodge of my family, showing the fallen stars on the prairie, the rounded foothills, the large, symbolic doorway of the otter's den, Night Sky, and Morning Star.

[P.69-C]

I take pity on you and want to give you some of 539
my Power." Then Otter took some sweetgrass and 773
made incense on his altar. He told the young man
to listen carefully as he sang a number of songs. 532 ●
The young man listened and learned these words: [533]

Man, he says, my tipi is Powerful.
Woman, she says, my tipi is Powerful.
Rain is my Medicine.
My children, they hear me.
The Earth, below, it is Powerful.

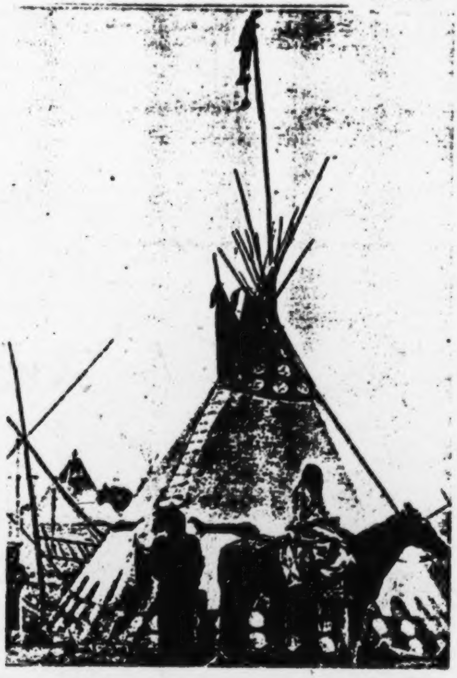
Under water are our tipis.
My tipi, it is Powerful.
My smoking, it is Powerful.

Otter also taught the young man the sacred movements that go along with each song. He gave the young man an otter skin with many fine decorations and taught him how to make otter movements with the skin, and the songs to sing while doing so. He gave the young man a smoking pipe and a drum to use for the otter ceremony. He told him, "When you get back to the camps of your People, you must make all these sacred objects I have shown you, so as to carry on this ceremony properly. You must paint your tipi with the same designs you see on mine. You must make incense often to remind yourself of my holy Power. If you do all these things faithfully, then you may call on my Power whenever you wish." When the young man awoke, he returned to the Blackfoot camps and did as Otter had directed. From that first dream originated all the tipis that now have otter designs.

The sacred Bundle that goes along with an 532
ordinary Otter Tipi (as well as most other painted
tipis) contains one or more *Iniskims*—sacred 778
buffalo stones. Iniskims are sacred helpers; they [777]
bring good luck. Iniskim songs are sung during
the incense and prayer ceremonies. Most families [533]
had at least one in their household in the Old
Days.

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

342
532●
778



Tough Bread with his wife and their Yellow-Otter-Flag Tipi, in the Blood camp of 1891. The Otter Flag can be seen over the top of the lodge poles. (R. N. Wilson)

The sacred Bundle for an Otter-Flag Tipi 778
contains an otter skin and one or more other animal
skins. Bells are suspended from the nose, feet, [531]
and tail of the flag itself, although in the past [237]
dried deer hooves were used instead of bells.
Bands of quillwork or beadwork decorate the [534]
neck, paws, and tail, and brass shoe-buttons are
sewn on for eyes. The Otter Flag itself is kept in a [415]
rawhide case for most of the year. The case is
hung out behind the tipi in the daytime, and

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 72-A]

[p. 70-B]

taken inside at night. During ceremonies such as 779
the Sun Dance, the Bundle is opened and the flag [415]
tied to an extra-long tipi pole so that it hangs high
above the doorway. As it waves in the air, the [237]
bells jingle, reminding everyone of its presence. [534]
Two of the Otter Tipis last summer had Otter
Flags flying above their doorways. One belonged
to the family of Many Grey Horses, who also
owns a Medicine Pipe Bundle. The other one belonged
to an old lady named Mrs. White Man
Left. The transfer ceremony for an Otter-Flag [432]
Tipi used to be very involved and took four days [796]
to complete.

OTHER PAINTED TIPI DESIGNS

Let me explain some of the spiritual meanings of 532
tipi designs. Basically, the painting on a tipi is 822
divided into three sections: the band of symbols
around the bottom represents Earth; the large
area in the center represents Universe; and the
section at the top represents Sky.

The bottom band is generally painted black,
brown, or red, to represent the color of the Earth,
or else it is painted green to represent the grasses
and trees. Within this band are usually two rows [824]
of discs representing the puffballs that cover the
prairies, considered to be the remains of fallen
stars. This bottom band can be straight and flat,
for the flatness of the plains; topped by semicircles,
for the rolling hills; or pointed, for the
mountains. In the back, directly opposite the en- [797]
trance, the bottom band often rises in large
square or oval projection, representing the entrance
to the animal's den the original owner
went to for his dream. In a few cases this large
design represents the boulders on which buffalo
like to rub themselves when out on the prairie.

The large, central area on the tipi cover usually symbolizes the universe in general, and can also represent the particular element in which the dream animal or bird lives. It is here that the major tipi motifs are depicted. The male symbols

[p.72-A]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

will usually appear on the south side of the lodge, 532
the female on the north. Sex is depicted either by 822
sex organs, minor color changes, or by horns. The
placement of the sexes on the outside of the tipis [562]
is, by custom, opposite that of the persons seated inside, as the place for women seated inside a tipi is on the south, and for men, on the north. Perhaps this originally signified some spiritual relationship between the lodge's spiritual guardians and its occupants. If so, this symbolism was probably lost when the People no longer lived a daily life in harmony with nature.

As few as one pair or as many as four pairs of animals are painted in the center band. The animals usually have "lifelines" representing the major organs. A lifeline begins at the mouth and is drawn in sections of red and green. It runs to the heart, which is painted red. Two green circles toward the animal's rear represent the kidneys.

The basic color of the large central area is most often red or yellow, and less often brown, green, blue, or the basic white of the cover material itself. If the original owner was taken into [787]
water during the dream in which he was given the design, the background color is usually yellow. If the dream occurred on land, the color is most
often red or brown. Designs given by birds or [776]
other Spirits from above most often are white or blue.

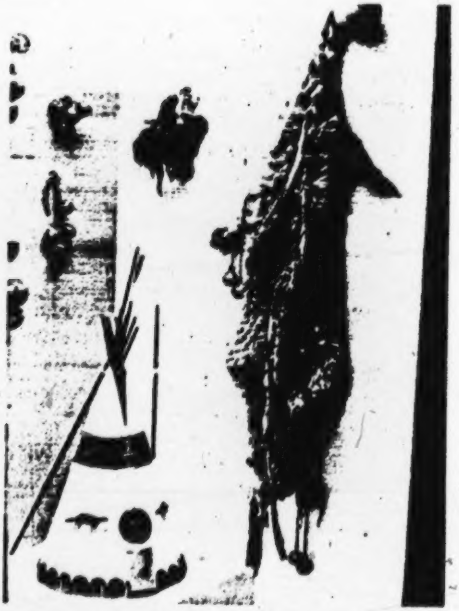
Tipis without a symbolic representation of the dream animal's home will have instead one of two other symbols drawn in the back. The most common is a circle for the spiritual center of the universe. Sometimes the symbol is like a bull's-eye, several concentric circles representing Sun, Moon, and Earth.

The area at the top is usually painted black for Night Sky, when dreams are most common. In the back of this part of the tipi, a Maltese cross is usually painted in yellow or orange, represent-
ing either Morning Star or a moth. The moth flies [787]
at night and is considered to be the bearer of
good dreams. To inspire good dreams about buf- [237]

[p. 72-B]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

532 ●
778



Wolverine Tipi Flag on display at the Provincial Museum. The model shows the ancient tipi design and the manner of hanging the flag over it. The tipi and flag were bought from the Bloods. The other objects are also painted tipi decorations, mostly bells.

[432]

---

falo hunting or horse raiding, a buffalo or horse tail used to be fastened to the center of the cross and left to flutter in the air. Sometimes a crescent moon appears instead of a Maltese cross.

532
822
[237]

Large discs are painted on the ear flaps of the tipi, representing the two constellations, Great Bear and Pleiades. On some tipis, lines are painted below Night Sky: different colors represent a rainbow, the symbol of a clearing storm; lines painted in the same color usually represent the paths of the dream animals.

[p.73-A]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

Shortly after 1900, Clark Wissler, an anthro- 532
pologist, interviewed the holy leaders of our dif- 424
ferent divisions to compile a list of all the painted
tipi designs among the Bloods. This was not 432
simple to do, because tipis, like most other sacred [114]
objects, have always been freely transferred from [778]
one division to another. For example, our own all-
red Painted-All-Over Tipi, which originated long [787]
ago in the dreams of a Blood man, is included in Wissler's list of Blood tipis. Yet, not long after this list was compiled the tipi was transferred to a North Blackfoot man, and remained among them for about thirty-five years. The last Blackfoot owner, a man named Rainy Chief, or Herbert Lawrence, transferred the cover to old Bottle, from our reserve. Bottle didn't use the cover much and later transferred it to his son, Camoose
Bottle, who gave it to his brother, Jim. We got it [123]
from Jim through a South Piegan man, who was going to have it transferred to himself, but could not gather enough goods for payment. The cover is now very old, so we use it only for special occasions and then only when rain does not threaten —there are many small holes in it.

Although many painted tipis have traveled 532
among our divisions like our All-Over Tipi, Wiss- 184
ler's list includes tipis that were considered distinctly Blood.

1. Big-Striped
2. Mountain Goat
3. Wolverine
4. Bear
5. Fisher
6. Elk
7. Half-Black
8. Bald Eagle
9. All-Over
10. War
11. Crane
12. All-Stars
13. Prairie Chicken
14. Horse

[p.73-B]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

● 532
184

15. Buffalo Hoof
16. Yellow
17. Otter
18. Horse
19. Snake
20. Water-Monster
21. Buffalo Head
22. Skunk
23. Fish
24. Space
25. Center

[115] In 1966, an old Blood man named Joe Gambler gave the Provincial Museum a list of tipis he considered to be traditionally Blood:

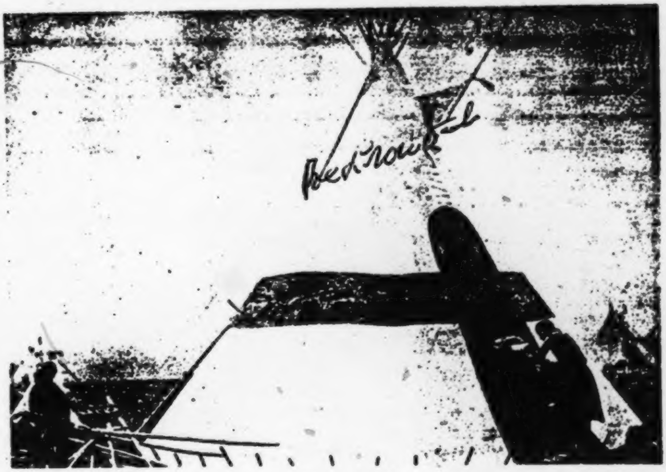
1. Buffalo Head
2. Head Down
3. Skunk
4. Half-Black
5. Sheep
6. Prairie Chicken
7. Horse
8. War
9. War (second type)
10. Otter
11. Yellow
12. Hoof (Buffalo)
13. Fish
14. Snake
15. Striped
16. Rib
17. All-Painted
18. Half-Yellow
19. Half-Yellow Otter
20. Gnawed (Ice)
21. Downward Star
22. Across

[p.74A]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

Red Crow's famous Single-Circle, or Big-Striped, Painted Lodge in 1892. (R. N. Wilson)

342
532



[P.74-B]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

By comparing these two lists you can get 532
some idea of the tipis' varying names and translations, 424
as well as their transfer among our People 432
during the sixty or so years between the lists. An 184
example is the Big-Striped Tipi, in Wissler's list
but not in Gambler's. This tipi belonged to our
head chief, Red Crow, until his death in 1900.
The chief met with his council and his visitors in
this very large tipi. On Red Crow's death, the [428]
lodge was passed on to his son, Crop-Eared Wolf.
Crop-Eared Wolf gave it to his aunt, Red Crow's
sister, who was married to a South Piegan named
Running Rabbit. The lodge has been among the
South Piegans for such a long time that they now
consider it one of their old lodges.

The Big-Striped Tipi is also known as the 532
Single-Circle Lodge. A very wide red band with 822
six black otters is painted around it. The otters
run from back to front, three on one side and
three on the other. A long red oval just below the [237]
smokehole represents the otters' home; instead of
Morning Star in the back is a green symbol with a
narrow yellow border representing Moon, with a
horse's tail attached.

Although Wissler lists only one War Tipi, 532
there are traditionally two in our division. When [114]
the owner of a War Tipi makes a new cover, he
will either copy the adventures painted on the old
cover or have someone draw new adventures. One
of our War Tipis once showed the war adventures
of such men from the past as Natosina (Eagle
Plume), Heavy Shield, Eagle Child, Running
Sun, and White Wolf. The scenes showed scalps,
stolen horses, and captured weapons. When this [178]
same War Tipi was repainted a few years ago, it
depicted the adventures of men like Shot-on-Both-Sides,
Hungry Crow, and Stephen Fox. As the
war days were long over, theirs were not war adventures,
but scenes showing horses raided from
distant ranchers and goods captured from the
wagons and cabins of sheepherders and trappers.

For many years the Elk Tipi, which is on
Wissler's list, belonged to our head chief, Shot-on- [114]

[p.75-A]

Both-Sides. It now belongs to his son Jim, our 532
present head chief, who stays in it during our Sun [114]
Dance Encampments. It is painted blue with two
large yellow elk.

The Half-Yellow Tipi, painted half yellow
and half red, also was set up at our last Sun
Dance gathering. It now belongs to Albert Wolf [432]
Child, who plans to transfer it to his son to keep
it in the family. Formerly, a variation of it be- [424]
longed to our Old Man, as well as Mokakin. The
Center-of-the-Universe symbol is drawn at the
rear of the tipi.

Along with his list, Gambler also recorded 773
his stories of the origin of some designs. Here is 539
his version for the Half-Yellow Otter Tipi. 532

Oki! The Half-Yellow Otter design—yellow otters around one side and black otters around the other. This tipi was once owned by a man who lived in the water. One day another man sat nearby on a hill; looking down at the river, he suddenly saw tipis emerge from the water. The man from the water told the man on the hill, "This tipi is mine. Jump into the water and go into it. You are having difficult times. I will give you my tipi." The man jumped into the water, entered the tipi, and the transfer ceremony was performed.

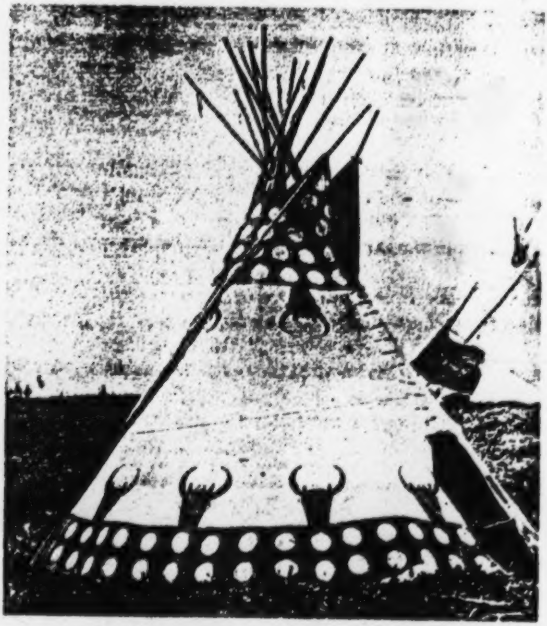
Gambler also told this story:

Oki! The Buffalo Head design. A buffalo bull had been killed and all his insides withered away. One time, a man was out on the prairie during a blizzard, so he slept inside the dead buffalo. During his sleep, the man was told, "Don't worry, nothing will happen to you. When you get back to your home draw my head all over your tipi to remind you of the Power that saved you."

In the Old Days, owners were well familiar 178
with the stories and ceremonies for their tipis. 796
This knowledge gave spiritual help and Power to 532
789

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

the tipi's inhabitants. They depended on the tipi's Powers to protect them from enemy attacks and from natural harm, such as wind and lightning. The spiritual protection of the tipi meant much more to them than its physical protection as a shelter. After the People no longer lived daily in tipis, the meanings of the tipi stories of origin and ceremonies began to lose importance. 178 532 796 789



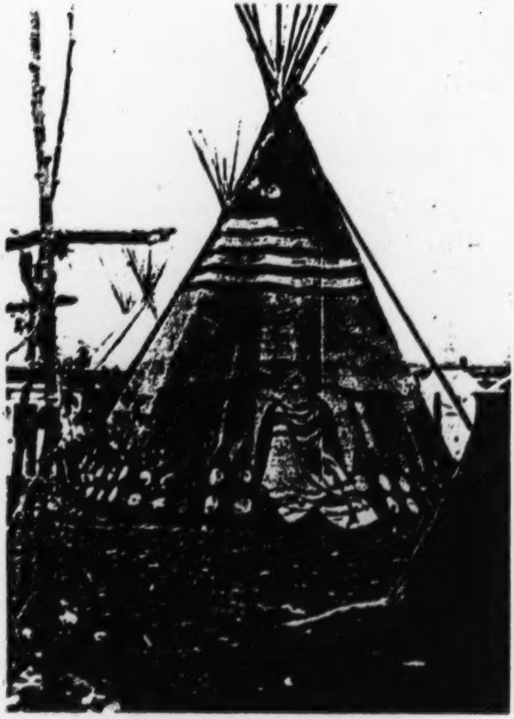
342
532

Buffalo Head Tipi, also known as the Upside-Down Buffalo Head Lodge. Sometime after this 1891 scene, this lodge was transferred to old Shot-on-Both-Sides, who gave it to his relatives, Mr. and Mrs. Wadsworth, when they took over the Backside-to-the-Fire Pipe. They later "fed" the lodge to the Crazy Dogs Society, one of whose members, Frank Red Crow, had it transferred to himself. (R. N. Wilson) [424] [432]

[p.76-A]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

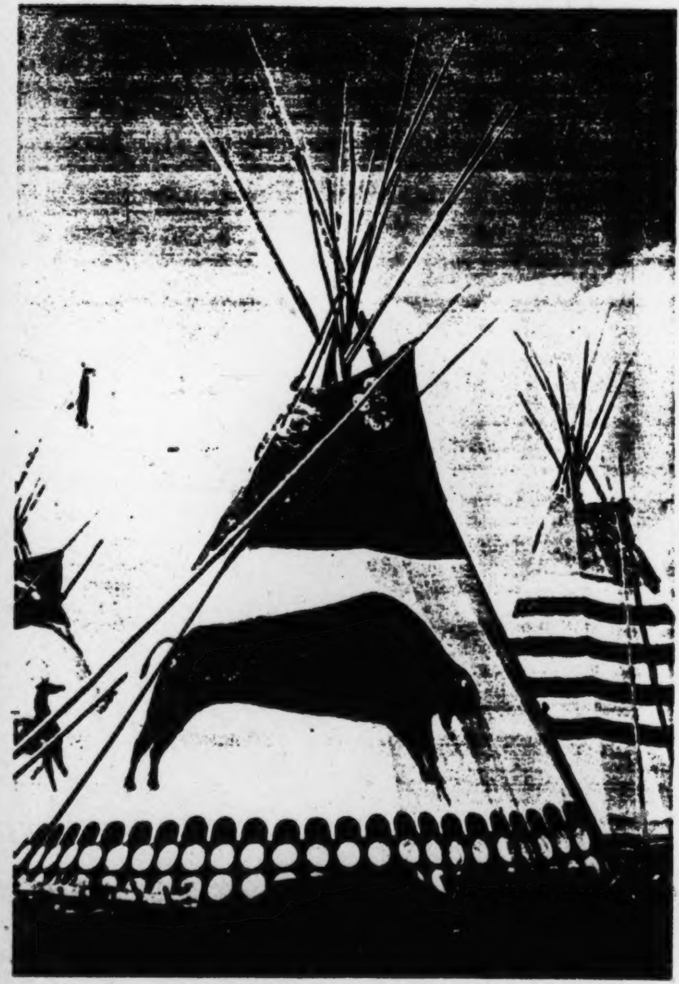
532 ●
822
342



The Coyote Lodge. The background is yellow, like the prairie sands; the bottom projections represent mountain peaks. Four stripes represent constellations in the sky.

[p.76-B]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

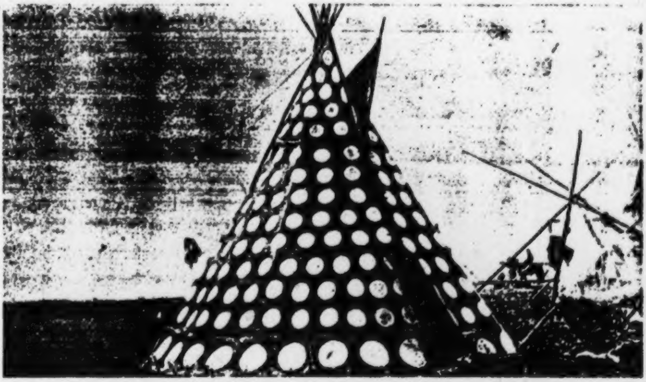


532
342
184

Atsitsina's Buffalo Painted Lodge a few years ago. In the background is the Striped Lodge and the Deer Lodge with an Otter Flag. This is the Buffalo Lodge of the Bloods; two similar Buffalo Lodges existed among the Piegans, as well.

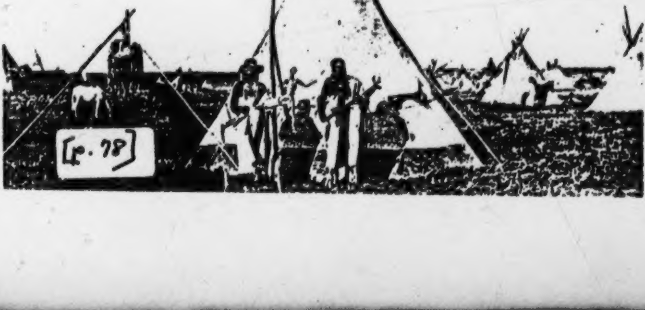
21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

342
822
● 532



All-Star Painted Lodge in 1891. (R. N. Wilson)

Antelope Painted Lodge in the Blood Camp in 1891. The background color of this lodge was yellow, to represent the antelope's sandy prairie environment. The stripe around the bottom represents the open plains. At the top is Night Sky with a
[237] crescent Moon. The door flap of this tipi was an antelope hide, and dried antelope hooves were strung up and fastened to the smoke flaps and over the doorway, to rattle in the wind. An antelope fawn skin was used as a flag. The tipi's special incense
[531] was sweet grass mixed with dried antelope droppings. The figure on the back of the tipi represents its Owner. In one hand he is holding an offering to Sun, and in the other a pipe. The lodge is the home of a distinguished man, because it sits farther
[361] inside the camp circle than the others. (R. N. Wilson)
[554]



[p. 78]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

what a little girl did with a painted lodge of her 593
own, she told us: 858

"It wasn't a big tipi. It was just a little tipi
for kids to play in. My mother made it for me to 857
play in with my friends. My sister and I, we went 345
to boarding school. My mother, she put up the
tipi right by the school, and nobody bothered it.
She put in a panichtan [lining], and she tanned [237]
some little animals and put the skins around the
inside for rugs. She even made little bags from [415]
rawhide [parfleches] and put them all around the
inside. When my mother came to visit us, she
stopped on the way at Long-Nosed Crow's [Wilson's Trading Post] and bought a lot of groceries.
Then she told me to invite all my friends to the
tipi and we had a big dinner. Even the nuns
sometimes came over to sit in the little tipi
with us."

Ponah said that the design painted on the 593
tipi had been dreamed of by somebody and was 858
actually transferred to her. The tipi was painted 852
yellow, with four lines of stars going from top to 787
bottom, one line at each of the four directions. 532●

Our conversation wandered on to other
things, and of course, Mokakin told us more old 432
Napi stories.

539
773

ANOTHER NAPI ADVENTURE

One time, Napi came out from a forest and found a bunch of Gophers playing in a meadow. This was how they played: One of them would lie down in an old fireplace and the others would cover him up with earth and then build a fire on top of him. As soon as the fire got too hot, the buried one would call out, "Tsst, Tsst!" Napi asked the Gophers if he could play, and they told him he could. So he lay down in the fireplace and the Gophers put earth over him and built a fire on top of it. As he got warm, he called out, "Tsst, Tsst!" The Gophers uncovered him. Soon it was Napi's turn to build the fire.

Napi said to the Gophers, "I think it's easier

[p.120-B]

hot summer. We knew that we would not be very 796
comfortable after wrapping our wool blankets 292
around ourselves. Tradition requires participants 778
in holy ceremonies to cover themselves with a
robe or blanket to show modesty and respect before
the Holy Spirits. At most Medicine Pipe
ceremonies, this tradition is mainly followed by
current Medicine Pipe Owners and by the leader
of the ceremony. Others wear blankets only while
dancing with one of the sacred objects from the
Bundle. However, a few people ignore tradition
and go without their blankets altogether.

To complete our preparations for the ceremony, 778
we took the shell necklaces and bead bracelets 796
from the rawhide paint-and-accessory bag of 301
our Bundle and put them on. Medicine Pipe
Owners and their families used to wear these [793]
symbols all the time. Now most people wear them
only to ceremonies. They serve as a constant reminder [82]
of the main elements of nature: shells to
represent water; blue beads to represent the sky;
thongs to represent animals; and a coating of
sacred red paint to represent Earth.

We heard the voice of NinnaOnesta again, 778
announcing that the ceremony was about to begin. 796
We wrapped ourselves in our blankets (Wolf
Child and me; women generally wear theirs over [292]
their shoulders) and immediately we became very
hot! How it must have been in the Old Days [291]
when many of our People dressed like that every [178]
day, wearing a buffalo robe or wool blanket as
outer garments and buckskin or wool clothing
underneath! They had deep convictions in our
customs to find happiness despite physical discomfort.

The Elk Tipi was a large yellow-painted 778
lodge with the head and horns of a buffalo 796
painted over the front doorway. Hoof tracks decorated 346
both sides. The tipi belonged to Richard
Little Dog, who led Medicine Pipe ceremonies [532]
among the South Piegans in Montana. Jim Twig [422]
borrowed this tipi for his ceremony, because it
could accommodate many people. A second tipi [426]

[p. 133-4]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

of those holy Pipes and learn how to live with it." 778
In those days my life was good. I had a lot of 782
horses. I had everything and I wasn't in need. 755

When I came home, my brother, Doesn't Own Nice Horses [Jack Low Horn], was at my house. I came in and I hugged my wife and I told her, "Oki, Last Badger Face, so that you will become healthy again, we will become Ninamskaniks." My brother was surprised and said, "That is a good thing you are doing. You are taking refuge in our holy Ways. My old Pipe, Backside-to-the-Fire, you go and take it." I agreed, and I told him I would go right away to the present Owner and offer to take it.

I filled my smoking pipe and we started out in 778
our wagon to the home of White Badger Face 432
[Fred Weaselfat]. We went inside and I gave him [276]
my pipe. I said, "Here, smoke this. I am asking
for your holy Pipe. I am coming to your Pipe
so that my wife will get better again." He just
said, "Ah," which meant yes to me. Then he took [782]
my pipe and he prayed with it. I told him, "I just
bought two good horses and will give them to
you to show that I meant what I said." He told
me, "Well, you got yourself a Pipe. You can have
it transferred to you anytime you want."

On the way back home, Jack said, "Oki, in the
summer it will be transferred to you." He told me
it would be too much trouble to start making
a new tipi, with my wife still sick. He said, "Buy [342]
a white tipi. But it will not look right just to have
a plain white one. My wife, Cuts Her Hair, still
has the Buffalo Tipi. We will paint it on your
white tipi."

I bought the white tipi from an old lady, Yellow Star. I asked her, "Old Lady, why don't you give me your tipi?" She said, "Yes, I have no use for it. Take it, and pay me whatever you want."

As soon as it was summer I told my brother, [434]
"I am going to go to Bald Head's [a white
Rancher named Ryere]. I will sell my hay to him
so that I will have the money for the transfer."

We painted the tipi. My brother, Ksachkom [532]

[p. 145-A]

[Fred Eagle Plume] drew the buffalo on it. They 778
told me when the Sun Dance started they would 432
go there and set it up. I started bringing my hay [532]●
to Bald Head. I worked hard and saved up nine
hundred dollars. Then word came that they had [454]
set up the tipi and that we should come to the Sun Dance Encampment.

I got my money and bought the things for payments. The next day I went to camp. In the distance I could see the tipi. When I got there I moved right into it. The next day we went to get the horses I was going to give for payment. They were in the pasture of Camoose, my brother-in-law.

First we had to transfer the Buffalo Tipi to 778
me. Calling Last painted me for the tipi transfer 432
and led the ceremony. My relatives got out four 796
eagle headdresses. My brother said, "You will get [532]
painted for these. They will be transferred to [342]
you."

The next morning Heavy Head and Speaks-in- [302]
the-Middle [Iron] came with some others to capture me. They took me to the tipi where the Bundle was transferred. On the way, we stopped four times; each time there was a headdress for the Owner.

When they finished transferring the Bundle we brought it home, and I asked Heavy Head if he would finish the ceremony in my lodge. So
we had a dance with the Pipe. Then Heavy Head 778
initiated me to step over a dog, so that I would 432
be allowed to step over dogs from then on. They 796
brought a dog over in front of our tipi. Somebody
brought out a hot coal and placed it by the dog. 424
Heavy Head made incense with sweet pine and held each of my feet over it four times. The fourth time he told me to step over the dog. He said, "Now you will not get hurt by touching a
dog or by being around one." But he said that [784]
dogs must never come into a tipi or house where a Medicine Pipe is. That's the Old Way.

The next morning Heavy Head woke me up and gave me the right to get up. I was just like a

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 146-B]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977 NP6 Blackfoot NP6
Blood

SCENES FROM THE CEREMONY WITH THE LONG-TIME PIPE– BLOOD RESERVE: 1968

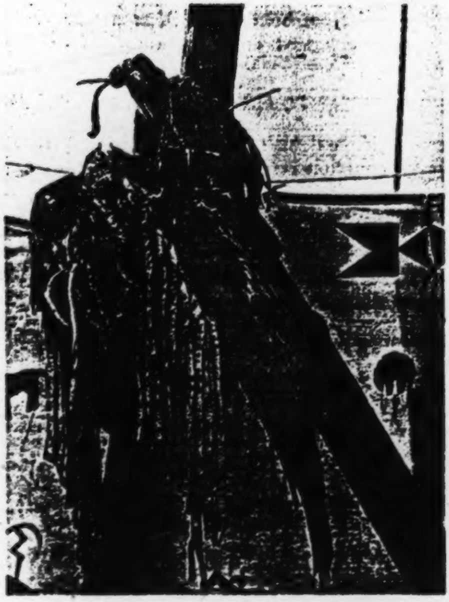
(Photos from Alberta Provincial Museum)

776
778
353
532●
782
276
291
292

Brown Chief Calf, the leader, praying with the Long-Time Pipe.

[P.150-B]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood



796
778
415
531
532
237
283
417

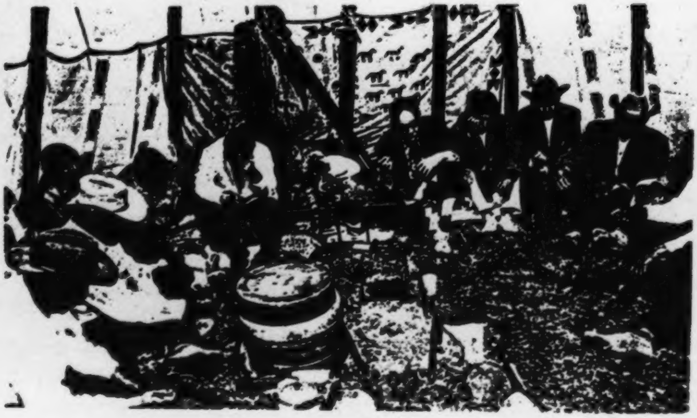
Accessories for the Long-Time Pipe: a rawhide bag for paints and necklaces; an eagle-wing fan for the Owner; a braided rawhide rope for the Owner to use when horse raiding; and the wooden tripod to hang the Bundle on.

[p.150-c]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

796
778
● 532
291
353
782
276

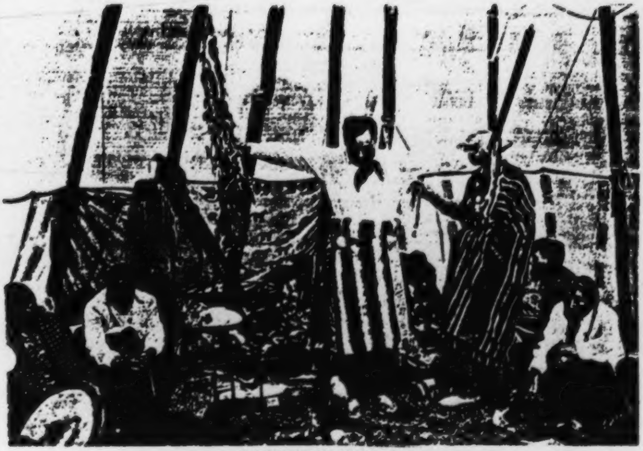
Participants praying with offerings of tobacco at the end of the ceremony.



[P151-B]

21: Hungry Wolf   P-4,5   (ca. 1972) 1977   NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

796
778
276
● 532
291
353
292
533



Pat Weaselhead (Mokakin), pausing at the beginning of his dance song. He is holding the Long-Time Pipe and the secondary Pipe.

[P.153-A]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

OUR FAMILY'S MEDICINE PIPE

Of the four Medicine Pipe Bundles that remain 778
among our People, ours is the only one that has 276
no name suggesting its origin. It has been called
"Pipe with a horse-head bowl," or is referred to
by the name of one of its notable past Owners.
None of our present Old People have ever heard of
it coming from somewhere else. It may have origi- [787]
nated in the dreams of some long-ago Blood.

There is one brief, old story that concerns 276
the mysterious Powers of our Bundle. Now, the 779
bowl for the sacred Pipe is made of red pipestone, 173
carved in the shape of a horse's head. It is very
old, similar in appearance to those made by the [324]
Sioux People and some of their eastern neighbors. [532]●
In the Old Days the People of those tribes had
sacred Pipes but without the accompanying Bun- [171]
dles. The bowl might have come with the sacred
Stem from one of these tribes. More likely, the [439]
original Blood Owner obtained the bowl through
trade.

During a long-ago opening ceremony, this horse-head bowl was somehow broken in two. The People were quite concerned about what might happen as a result of this accident. The Owner, whose name has been forgotten, put the two pieces back together, very slowly, and wrapped them up with buckskin. Then he placed them back into the Bundle. Atsitsina continues the story:

"The next spring the Bundle was opened, as always. The Owner told the leader of the ceremony, 'Be careful, don't move the bowl around. It's broken.' The leader said, 'Which one is broken?' 'The one for the main Pipe,' the Owner told him. 'It broke last time when we danced with the Pipe.' The leader was curious so he took off its wrappings. 'Sah,' he said, 'No, it isn't broken. You must be mistaken, because it was never broken anywhere.' He was holding up the bowl and looking it over very carefully. 'Ha—Ayah!' the

[p.155-A]

and that the grass would not grow very well. 821
People then said the buffalo flowers would not 825
grow tall and the buffalo would not be fat. Buffalo were said to get good and fat on the buffalo flowers.

When Sun paints both of his cheeks (when 821
two Sun Dogs, or halos, show) the weather will
turn very bad. When Sun paints his forehead and [763]
his chin as well as his cheeks (four Sun Dogs), it is a sign that a great man is going to die.

A rainbow during a storm meant that Thunder was roping the rain clouds and taking them somewhere else, so that the storm would soon be over.

Today the Old People say that signs of nature are difficult to read because of the ways that man has changed nature around. Atsitsina gives this example:

Oki, I used to hear the Old People say that when Night Light [Moon] *is lying on her back that she is resting and that the weather will be good. My father would say, "She is lying back like a bowl and holding in all the rain water. When she is finished resting, she will make it cold or rain again."*

When Night Light is standing all the way up, the Old People will say that she is mad. You better dress warm because it is going to get cold.

Now it is all different. These white men, they 821
are bad. They fly to the moon and they have 829
moved it. All things have changed. The weather is not like it used to be. The things that my father taught to me don't always work right anymore because things change in strange ways. That is not how things were made to be.

THE SEVEN BROTHERS

Our Old People thought of stars as the spirits of 821
legendary People, and the names they endowed them with suggest these origins. Most of these legends have been forgotten, but three are still
quite well known. Two concern the two groups of [532]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

stars that are symbolically represented by circles on the smoke flaps of most of our painted Medicine Tipis. 821 [532] ●

One legend tells of that part of the Great Bear commonly called the Big Dipper. We call it the Seven Brothers. 773 539 821

In the long-ago there was a widowed man who had nine children: six grown sons, a small son, and two daughters, the younger of whom cared for the little boy. To keep the family supplied with food he and his six grown sons went out hunting nearly every morning. As soon as the hunters left, the grown daughter would immediately go off to gather firewood.

As time went by, the younger daughter began to wonder why her older sister always spent so much time gathering firewood, and why she went to do it only while the men were away. So one day she followed her sister into the brush. She was much surprised to see her older sister meeting with a large bear and making love with him for some time. She hurried home, much confused by what she had seen.

When her father and brothers returned that evening, the young girl told them about her discovery. They were quite insulted, as not only had the older sister embarrassed the family by turning down several good men who wished her for a wife, but now she had an illicit husband who was a bear. They immediately gathered their weapons and went after the bear and killed him.

When the older sister learned what had happened to her lover, she was greatly upset. She went to the body of the bear and took from it a part, which she wrapped up and carried next to her own body.

The People in the camp learned about the incident and ridiculed the girl until she became very angry. She prayed to the Spirit of her lover for help, and all at once she turned into a huge bear. She ran through the camp and tore down the lodges and killed most of the People, before the Power left her and she again became herself.

[p.200-B]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

back into their sister, but she was dead. 773
The Powerful brother felt sad for having 539
killed his own sister. He said to the others, "Well, 821
we have no one left here on Earth now, so we might as well go somewhere else." The others agreed and asked where they might go. He told them to close their eyes, and then he shot an arrow far into the sky. When they opened their eyes they were all floating in the sky.

Thus was formed the Big Dipper, or Ursa 821
Major. The four brothers who fell from the tree are the four lowest stars in the group, while the other brothers form the remaining three. Some say that the small star to one side of the handle is the little sister, while others say that she married one of the stars of the Little Dipper, and that she is the North Star, or Pole Star. Our People, who call this "the star that never moves," used it as a nighttime compass in the Old Days.

Another nighttime compass our Old People used was Morning Star, which the Old People called *Ipisoachs*. In our legends, he is the son of Sun and Moon, which is why he shines during the time between night and day. Like his father, he comes from the east, indicating the arrival of morning.

There is another star that is not quite so bright and comes up before Morning Star; this was called Mistaken Morning Star, for obvious reasons.

The other group of stars usually represented [532]
on the smoke flaps of our sacred tipis are commonly known as the Pleiades, but we call them the Poor Children.

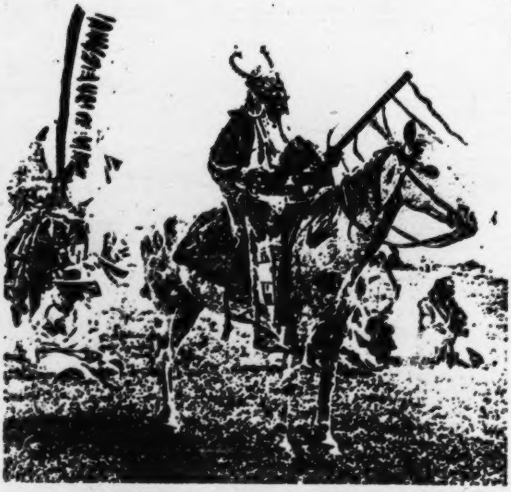
THE POOR CHILDREN

In the camps of the long-ago there was a poor 773
family with six boys. They were always dressed 539
shabbily. It was early in the summer season, when 821
men went out every day to hunt and replenish the supply of meat and hides that had been used up during the winter. This was the time most chil-

[p.201-B]

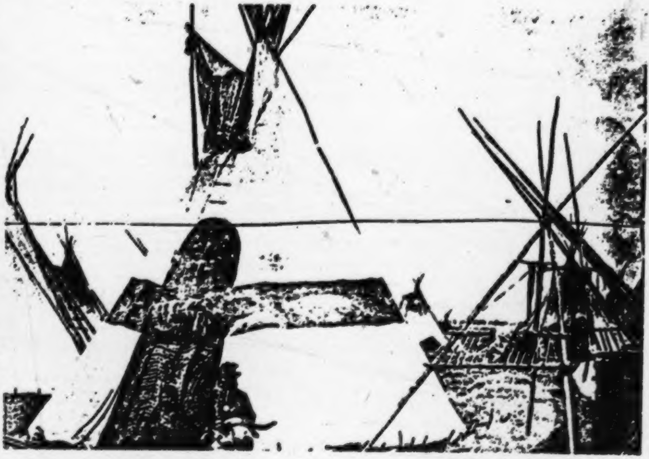
21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

292
492
575
531
532



Mountain Horse, leader of the Crow Carriers Society, dressed for battle. He wears a Medicine
headdress, as well as a weasel-tail suit of shirt and leggings. Each of these articles was transferred [422]
ceremonially. Symbols of scalps he has taken are tied to his rifle. The hand on his horse represents
an enemy he killed in a hand-to-hand encounter; the two large spots represent places where horses [796]
he was riding were shot in battle. On the horse behind him is old *Bumble Bee*, who is holding a
staff of the Crow Carrier's Society. Bumble Bee enlisted in the armed forces at the same time as [703]
did several of Mountain Horse's sons. However, he could speak no English and refused to cut his
hair, so he was sent back home. Before he left he is said to have told the other Blood soldiers: [177]
"Don't be foolish like these white soldiers. They call off the war every day at mealtime. You boys
want to keep on shooting, even if you see them sitting down to eat." (Glenbow Archives)

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

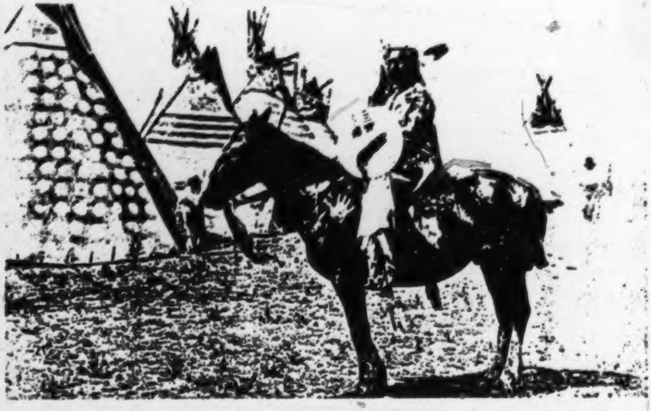


342
417
778
622
532

Red Crow and his head wife in a Blood camp in the late 1800's. Some people today question the showing of sacred bundles in photographs, but the people of the past did not have such concerns. Red Crow's Medicine Pipe Bundle hangs over the doorway of his lodge. The ends of the Shawl are pulled back to expose parts of the Bundle on each end. At that time he was owner of this painted tipi design, known as the Single Circle Lodge. It now belongs to the South Piegans. To the right is a frame made of travois poles, which could be used as a rack to hang things from or as a frame for a sun shelter. (R. N. Wilson) [829]

[p.244-B]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood



361
532
531
714
237

Weasel Tail ready for battle. His face is painted and he carries his Medicine shield, rifle, and coup stick. He often wore an eagle feather in his hair. He is also wearing his sacred shirt, designed with paint and perforations and said to be impenetrable by bullets or arrows. And in fact, he lived through many battles to tell about them. His horse's tail is tied up in the war party style, and is symbolically painted: the hands represent enemies killed by Weasel Tail in hand-to-hand encounters, while the white spot on the hip shows where one of Weasel Tail's horses was once hit during battle. At the left is his Yellow-Star Tipi, with his wife standing outside. (Glenbow Archives)

[411]
[771]
[789]

[P-268-A)

arouse it, and rode back home as fast as he could. 586
When Cree Man arrived at the camp, Calf Shirt 593
asked for the snake. Cree Man began to shake 825
and cry. He was afraid to touch the snake again
lest it bite his stomach. Calf Shirt told him to spit 789
some more of the plant on his hands and on the
snake's head, after which Cree Man was able to
pick up the snake. Calf Shirt put it into a white
sugar bag.

Cree Man returned to his home with his wife, but he was unable to sleep for several nights. He continued to have nightmares about rattlesnakes. Calf Shirt sent some sacred paint to him and told him to keep using rattlesnakes for his Power, now that he knew how to handle them. Cree Man just wanted to forget the whole experience.

Calf Shirt used his Rattlesnake Power to 756
doctor various ailments. One of his specialties was 842
sterilizing women. Among his doctoring articles
was a buckskin snake that was painted black and [237]
had a green glass bead attached to the head and a
small bell to the tail. He would lay this snake next [531]
to a woman's body, sing his song and give her
some kind of Medicine, and the woman would
never have children again.

Oddly enough, however, he did not have the 756
Power to doctor rattlesnake bites. One time he 752
was careless with the one that he carried with him
and it bit him. His relative, old Weasel Head, [759]
paid a good horse to a deaf old woman who was
able to doctor Calf Shirt until he was well.

The Old Man said that Calf Shirt was 756
famous everywhere, but that few people came 231
very near him, because they feared his snakes. He
always kept one in a cloth or buckskin bag inside [554]
his shirt, by his stomach. The Old Man said, "If
he came and sat down at a dance or gathering,
everyone around him would get up in a hurry and
sit somewhere else. We always wondered what he
fed his snakes."

Calf Shirt's Powers taught him to design a 756
sacred tipi. It was painted blue and had rattle- 778
532

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

snakes drawn around its sides. John Red Crane 756
was one of the later owners of this tipi. 778

Calf Shirt was the son of Spotted Bear, and 532
he was noted for his bravery during the war days.
I have not heard of any stories in which he took 756
his rattlesnakes along to war. In 1870 it is recorded 721
that he led a war party that killed seven
Crees, and during which he captured a pipe-tomahawk.
Seven Persons Creek, in southeast Alberta,
is said to have been named for this incident.

There was another Blood named Calf Shirt 622
who is sometimes confused with "Rattlesnake 156
Calf Shirt." This other one, sometimes referred to
as "Mad Calf Shirt," is thought to have been the 273
strongest and meanest Blood that ever lived. He
was a minor chief who kept his People in line by
beating them up and occasionally killing them.
His terrible temper was all the worse because of
his fondness for liquor. He had two wives, and [593]
the older one was the only person who could control
him at all. Sometimes when he was drunk she
would grab him by the ear and tell him, "Listen
to me, you old man!" His younger wife once tried
to keep him from fighting by offering him a kiss,
but he almost bit her lip off.

Mad Calf Shirt met his end at the hands of 177
Joe Kipp and some others operating a whiskey
trading post by a place called Left Bank, some
ways east of Fort MacLeod. Calf Shirt entered
the trading post late one night in an awful mood,
demanding more liquor. The traders mixed
strychnine with the brew and expected to see him
drop to the ground. Instead, he became even
more violent, threatening to kill those who were
near him. Someone hit him over the head with an
axe, from behind, but the handle broke and the
axe only bloodied his head. The traders then fired
several shots from close range into Calf Shirt.
That ended his fighting. They dragged his body
down to the frozen river, chopped a hole in the
ice, and stuffed his body through. The next morning 763
his wives went to look for him and found his
body lying down, outside of the hole. They began [533]

[p.271-8]

to sing his Power song which he told them would 763
bring him back to life. Others from the camp [533]
persuaded the women to stop, for fear that Mad
Calf Shirt would return even madder in the form
of a grizzly bear, which was said to have been his
Power.

WHITE WOLF

In his old age, White Wolf looked like a fierce 793
old warrior who had never given up his thoughts
about war trails. And until his death early in this [554]
century he was, indeed, one of the bravest warriors of the Old Days. Nevertheless, White Wolf
is best remembered as a very kind and able holy
man. He was Teacher to Natosina, who later became Teacher to Heavy Head, who was then
Teacher to our Old Man.

White Wolf was also known by the names [551]
White Bull and One Week. The latter name was
given to him because he so often said, "Rations in [553]
one week." It was the only expression he could
say in English, having learned it around the
agency.

Three of old White Wolf's war adventures 532 ●
are recorded with picture drawings on a buffalo 212
hide in the collection at the Glenbow Museum.
The story of one of the adventures goes like this:

My partner was Pinukwiim. We went together on most of our trails. On one of these we 726 793
were led by Sun Calf. There were eight of us. We went to raid the Crows, approaching their camps by going from coulee to coulee, so as not to be seen on the open prairie. Some early-morning hunters from the enemy camp spotted us just as we were going into a coulee to camp for the day. We should not have been out in the open after daybreak, so close to their camp. They went back to the Crow camp and returned with more than a hundred mounted men. Meanwhile, we got busy digging a pit, because there was no place for us to escape to on foot. We used our big knives for

[p.272-A]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

pinto tied in front of a lodge. "Hai-Jah," he thought to himself, "there is that fast pinto stolen from us a while back." So he cut the pinto loose and took it home. 721

Again some time went by. In 1908, the Bloods held a big July dance in their new dance hall on the reserve. Many visitors came from all over, including a number of Crows. Calf Robe had, long before, made a wooden replica of the prize pinto that he had stolen and then lost, and he carried the replica whenever he danced. On this occasion he hung the replica from a stick at one corner of the dance hall. Sometime during the 535 177 [532] [201] [555]

302
301
292
531
142

Calf Robe in 1910. (Pollard Photo)

[P. 287-A]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

292
532
212
[554]
[431]

Give-away in honor of the late Big Wolf, in 1939. The poster shows Big Wolf and illustrates his coups. The upside-down U's represent horses he stole, while the semi-circles with wiggly tails tell the number of times he acted as scout for war parties—a duty of honor. Two fine horses were given to friends and visitors, during the social dance at the Sun Dance Camp, in addition to the blankets seen in the photo and other goods and food items. Jack and Jim Low Horn are in the foreground. Big Wolf was Jim's father-in-law.

[P. 322-B]

21: Hungry Wolf   F-4,5   (ca. 1972) 1977   NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

796
292
575
276
346

A sacred Pipe about to be offered to the members of the Horse Society for smoking. The Pipe is being held by Day Rider. The Owner of the Pipe stands next to him, wearing the sacred headband. Last Gun, a South Piegan, is calling out his war exploits, while Weasel Tail stands nearby.

793 Charlie Revais, the priest, leading the procession from the holy woman's tipi. The construction in the foreground is an ordinary sweat lodge and not the 100-willow one for the Medicine Lodge people.

796
361
343
● 532

[p.328]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

796
346
342
● 532

Completed Medicine Lodge. The Striped Tipi is at the right.

431 Inside the Medicine Lodge during a give-away. John Cotton gives a present to one of the visitors seated in the foreground.
346 Behind him, wearing large headdresses, are Jack and Jim Low Horn. Standing in the back, with dark sunglasses, is Guy Wolf Child, dressed in part of his dance outfit.
292
291

[p. 329]

somewhat like that of their leader. One was fully dressed with a blanket 796
around his waist; the other was nude to the belt. The latter was painted 791
chiefly in red with a circle in blue on the back and one on the breast. The 535
former had a pair of horizontal lines on each cheek, those on the right, [302]
black, on the left, red.

It is said that formerly these dancers were nude, except for the breech-
cloth and moccasins. The entire body was painted. There seemed to have [302]
been no fixed painting, but the sun, moon, and stars were usually repre- [532]
sented. Around the head, they wore a wreath of juniper and bands of [824]
sagegrass around the neck, wrists, and ankles.

The weather dancers are not permitted to eat or drink during the day. [784]
Formerly, they remained in the booth continuously until the evening of the fourth day of their dancing; in recent years, they spend the night at home and return to the booth in the morning.

The functions of these dancers are not clearly understood. They seem 796
to be held responsible for the weather: i. e., upon them falls the duty of 789
preventing rain from interfering with the dancing. Whether they do this 821
because they happen to have independent shamanistic powers or whether 791
it is a mere function of their temporary office in the ceremony, cannot be determined. Other medicinemen often attempt to control the weather during the days preceding the formal entry into the booth as well as during the later days. In 1903 (Piegan) there was a contest between a number of rival medicinemen some of whom conjured for rain, others for fair weather: strange to say, clouds would threaten and then pass away during these days, which coincidence was interpreted as proof of evenly matched powers. Several times one of the partisans of fair weather came out near the site of the dancing lodge and danced to the sun, holding up a small pipe and occasionally shouting. He wore no regalia and danced in a different manner from that observed among the weather dancers at the booth. However, the man who led the weather dancers for many years until his death in 1908, was famous for his control over the weather. Once, it is told, he became enraged at the power making the weather bad, shouting out "Now, you go ahead, if you want to. I have great power and can stop you when I will."

In former times, the dreams of the weather dancers while sleeping in 796
the booth were considered of special supernatural significance, since, it 791
is said, they were *en rapport* with the sun. This *rapport* may account [787]
for what seems to be one of their chief functions — blessing the people.
During the days they are in the booth, individuals come to them "to be 791
prayed for." They come up and stand before the booth. The dancer 782
takes black paint and paints their faces. Then he prays to the sun for their 796
[302]

285 796 304 [782] [787] [432] it some weight as evidence. It seems, however, that warriors took the cutting because of a vow, similar to that of the medicine woman. Sometimes a man dreamed that the sun required it of him. The giving of property and the conditions of the transfer were the same as for "cutting the thong," though we have no information that "catching" was permitted. Such may, however, have been tolerated.

[824] The men taking the cutting were nude to the belt. Sage was tied around the wrists and ankles. The hair hung down, held in place by a wreath of cedar (some informants say sage). They were painted white. [302] [532] Rows of spots in blue extended down the sides of the face, over the shoulders and down the arms. Wavy lines of the same color were also drawn down the arms. A circle representing the sun, was made on the breast, also upon the chin and probably on the back opposite the one over the heart. On the forehead was another circle representing the moon. Other informants say a crescent moon in black was used instead of these circles.

285 796 304 432 [782] According to one informant, vows were made to purchase this ceremony when ill or in great danger. If the promise brought results, the vow was fulfilled at the next dance. The supplicant calls upon one having purchased the rite. They enter the booth of the weather dancers, a blanket is held up to shut out the gaze of the others. The transferrer then paints the purchaser. He cuts a hole through the skin of the right shoulder, over the scapula, and a hole over each breast. A small sharpened stick is thrust through each. A shield is hung on the back. Long cords were fastened to those on the breast, the ends of which were tied fast, high up to the center pole. The purchaser goes up to the pole, embraces it, and cries for a time. Then he backs off, and dancing, throws his weight on the ropes. The transferrer jerks the shield from his shoulders and if necessary, assists him in tearing loose. [787] At once, the purchaser goes out into the hills and sleeps in different places to receive power.

[761] It is said that all who take this ceremony die in a few years, because it is equivalent to giving one's self to the sun. Hence, the sun takes them for his own.

285 796 304 [782] The cutting was similar to that described by Catlin and other writers as observed elsewhere. Some informants say the dancers held whistles in their mouths and gazed at the sun as they danced. When all the thongs were torn out, some of the lacerated flesh was cut off as an offering to the sun.

McLean reports the following observations upon this ceremony at a Blood sun dance:—

. . . . The chief attraction to the pale-face is what has been ignorantly termed "making braves." I desired very much to see this ceremony *once*, that I might know the

439 wrapping paper, no paper sacks; our customers furnished their own
receptacles for their purchases. A pint cup, not a pound, was our
435 standard of measurement. Sugar was twenty-five cents per cup;
coffee, fifty cents; tea, fifty cents; flour, three cups for fifty cents;
and so on. Tobacco was two dollars a pound; cartridges, two dollars
a box; and other merchandise that we had in stock—red trade cloth,
blue trade cloth, calico, gingham, needles and thread, baking powder, Chinese vermilion, axes, knives, pots, and frying pans—went at
better than 100 per cent profit. Our prices exorbitant? No. The
Pikunis were rich; meat was their staff of life, and they had plenty
of it. All that we traded to them for their buffalo robes and furs were
—except cartridges, knives, and axes—luxuries that they did not need.

342 White were the four hundred new, buffalo-leather lodge-skins of
532 the Pikuni camp; those of the Sun priests, medicine men, painted in
vivid colors with symbols of their sky gods, sun, moon, and the
stars, and the birds and animals of their visions, their dreams. At
the rear top of every lodge-skin was painted in red and black a
[828] small figure resembling a Maltese cross. It was the symbol for the
butterfly, believed to be the giver of good dreams.

262 So long as they had plenty of buffalo for the killing of them,
no people anywhere on earth were happier, more content, than those
of the Blackfoot tribes. Meat was ***nitápi waksin***, "real food"; all other
461 eatables were ***kistapi waksin***, "nothing foods." As meat and hides
462 were needed, the men hunted. That was not work; it was exciting
sport. To the women fell all of the lodge work, yet they had much
leisure time; none worked as hard as the average white farmer's wife.

512 With the break of day, the women started their lodge fires, and
515 the men, wrapped only in robes or blankets, herded their boys, from
three-year-olds up, to the river to bathe. In summer, in winter, regardless of the weather, that was their daily custom. When unable
to find open water, they dropped their wraps and rolled in the snow,
then hurried home to dress. The baths, they said, inured them to
the cold; enabled them to hunt and butcher their kills in severest
[343] weather without even freezing their fingertips. In summer the women daily flocked to the stream for a swim; in winter they had sweat
baths in small lodges built for that purpose alone.

neck back along the length of its belly; and there was a large round 825
white spot on its flanks. The young man carefully removed its hide,
gave it to his father, old Spotted Eagle, and he told Kipp that, when
it was tanned, he should have it. At once one of the Sun priests 793
(medicine men, sacred pipe men) made objection. White buffalo be- 825
longed to Sun. Accordingly, when, in the summer, the Sun's lodge [346]
would be built by the sacred-vow woman, the tanned robe would
have to be tied to its center post, presented to Him Above. To which
Spotted Eagle replied that this was not a white buffalo; it was only
white spotted, therefore not Sun's own. Sun would not want it.
Therefore Raven Quiver (Kipp) should have it.

So, on a day in April, when we were apprised that old Spotted 431
Eagle and his family were coming in with the spotted robe, as Kipp 439
directed, we hurried to pile on the floor of the trade room some presents for him: a sack of sugar, five hundred cartridges, fifty pounds of flour, two blankets, one Winchester carbine, five pounds of tobacco, a gallon keg of whisky, little things for women.

Came in the old man, his son, his two wives—the old man with his robe on his arm. "As I promised you, Raven Quiver, here it is," he said, handing it to Kipp.

"Good. And there are a few presents for you all," Kipp replied, pointing to the pile of things on the floor. The old man stared at them, clapped hand to mouth in pleased surprise, exclaimed: "*Puhts ikahksaps nituka, Mastúnopachis!*" ("How generous is my friend, Raven Quiver!"). The son and the wives were equally happily surprised; they all but ran to the pile—the son to take up the carbine, the women to kneel and fondle their knicknacks. Said the old man to them: "At once wrap that keg in a blanket."

The robe was perfectly tanned, as soft as velvet; and on its flesh [532] ●
side the old man had painted some pictographs of enemies he had killed, enemy horses he had stolen, and encounters with grizzly bears. Said Kipp when we had extended and pinned it to a wall of the trade room: "It is the only pure-white-spotted robe that I have ever seen. And it is worth something. Anyhow a hundred dollars."

Word that we had a white-spotted buffalo robe spread all up and 000

24: Schultz F-3 (1877-1947) 1980 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Three Suns' War Record
(Told by Three Suns)

● 532 EVENTS IN THE LIFE of *Ninókskatosi*–("Three Suns," otherwise
212 known as "Big Nose"), last war chief of the Pikuni Indians, were por-
[23] trayed by him on an elk skin. This elk skin was given by Big Nose
[12] to Captain L. W. Cooke (later Brigadier General, U.S.A.), Third
[115] United States Infantry, while he was acting Indian agent for the
[624] Blackfoot, Blood, and Pikuni Indians in 1893–94. The following
[65] notes, interpretative of the various pictographs on the skin, were
made by Captain Cooke from verbal descriptions given by Big Nose
himself. At that time Big Nose was about seventy years old.

SCENE 1 (1870):

[648] Represents the capture of eight Pondera (Pend d'Oreille) Indians
by the South Piegans, with whom they were at war. A large village
of the Piegans were in camp in the Cypress Hills near old Fort Walsh,
Northwest Territory. The Piegans succeeded in surrounding their
foes and were about to kill them when Big Nose interceded in their
behalf, thus saving their lives and permitting them to return to the
[657] Flathead country from whence they came. It seems that at some pre-
vious time Big Nose had received a large silver medal from the United
States government in Washington; he was told at the time that he
must not kill or permit his people to kill anyone and that he and his
people must make peace with all tribes as well as with the whites,
hence his efforts to save the lives of this party.

SCENE 2 (1867):

Piegan camp near the Cypress Hills, Northwest Territory. Five 532
Sioux Indians were discovered attempting to steal horses. Big Nose 212
with a party of thirty Piegans attacked them, killing five of the party, 726
with the loss of one Piegan. Big Nose killed the first one. One Sioux 721
escaped. (Apparently there must have been at least six Sioux.)

SCENE 3 (1860):

A fight with the Crows on the "swift stream" which empties into the Yellowstone just west of where Fort Keogh is situated. The Piegans, led by Big Nose, numbered forty-two, and the Crows, twelve. The Piegans charged and the Crows ran into the brush. Their leader, however, stood his ground. Big Nose threw down his gun and closed in on the Crow, grappling with him. Another Piegan shot the Crow in the stomach; the Crow then drew a knife, but before he could use it the man who had already wounded him cut his arm and caused him to drop the knife. Big Nose then stabbed the Crow to death. For this deed Big Nose was given the name of "Crow Chief."

SCENE 4 (1861):

Near White Sulphur Springs, Montana. A surprise by the Ponderas. The Indian shown falling was the brother of Big Nose. The Piegan party numbered eleven, and the Pondera, sixty. The former retreated to the brush. The brother recovered, and one Pondera was killed.

SCENE 5 (1855):

Sweetgrass Hills, the east butte. At this time the Piegans and the 360
Ponderas were at peace, and sixty lodges of the Piegans and ten lodges of the Ponderas were camped together. Late at night, when soundly sleeping, Big Nose heard a gun fired and then another. They all sprang to arms and when they emerged from their lodges, they discovered that they were surrounded by about four hundred Sioux. So close had been the fire that the Piegan horses corralled inside the circle of lodges were nearly all killed. Those not killed made their

212 escape, except for the sorrel pinto horse ridden by Big Nose. The
532 Sioux by this time had possession of half of the Piegan lodges. Big
726 Nose on his pinto, which was wounded in the neck and then ex-
721 changed for the yellow horse, held his people together in the other half of the village, fighting till morning. The yellow figure was a Sioux, wounded by a Pondera, and he ran off followed by Big Nose, who pursued and stabbed him to death. The Sioux then withdrew with a loss of sixteen killed; the Ponderas and Piegans lost eleven.

SCENE 6 (1855):

[361] In the Cypress Hills, Northwest Territory. Two hundred lodges of Piegans were in camp. Two Sioux stole some of their horses. Big Nose and a few others gave chase. The horses of the Sioux gave out and they tried to escape on foot. Big Nose overtook the one shown in the scene, killing him with his knife.

SCENE 7 (1860):

In the Judith Basin in Montana. Big Nose crawled up on a Pondera lodge under cover of night, taking the horse shown picketed there. In the meantime the owner opened fire, shooting Big Nose through the coat. There were thirteen Piegans in the party and sixty lodges of Ponderas. The Piegans were a hundred miles from their own people. The horse shown was the only one taken, owing to the early discovery of the raiders by the Ponderas.

SCENE 8:

[727] Medicine pipes captured in battle.

SCENE 9 (1855):

Near the Cypress Hills, Northwest Territory. Eight Sioux attempted to steal horses from the Piegans. There were about four hundred lodges of Bloods and Piegans in camp. The Sioux stole six horses, were pursued, overtaken, and all killed but one. Big Nose held the horse and exchanged shots with the Sioux leader, whom he killed.

SCENE 10 (1859):

Prickly Pear Valley, near where Helena, Montana, now stands. 721
Big Nose and party, twenty-one in number, left their camp where 726
the old Blackfoot agency stood, on Badger Creek (fifteen miles from 532
the new agency at Browning, on the Great Northern Railroad). 212
Reaching the Prickly Pear, they found a camp of sixty lodges. Big Nose and another crawled up. Big Nose cut a fast horse loose from a lodge to which it was tied; his companion was killed in attempting a similar feat at another lodge. (It was the custom to secure their best horses—war ponies—by passing the lariat through the door of the lodge and fastening it to a lodgepole inside.) Six horses were obtained, and the raiders all escaped except the one noted above.

SCENE 11 (1847):

West butte of the Sweetgrass Hills, Montana. Three hundred [361] lodges of Piegans were in camp there. Fifty-three Crees made a night attack upon the Piegans, who were asleep when fired upon. Piegans fought little during the night, but when daylight came a general charge was made upon the Crees. Big Nose mounted and charged among the Crees. His horse was shot in the head. After he was dismounted Big Nose killed one Cree with his gun and two with his knife. All the Crees were finally killed; the Piegans lost thirteen killed and five wounded. The lower part of the scene also shows Big Nose, after being dismounted, in combat with a Cree. The latter hit Big Nose on the head with a flintlock gun, and a Piegan then shot the Cree from the rear.

SCENE 12 (1881):

Judith Basin, Montana. Forty lodges of Piegans were camped [361] there. Three Sioux attempted to steal horses. They were discovered before they could carry out their design. All three were killed by Under Bull and Young Bear Chief. Big Nose took, as shown in the drawing, the gun from one of them. He charged on the Indian whose gun would not fire.

SCENE 13 (1875):

721 Cypress Hills, Northwest Territory. Two hundred lodges of Pie-
726 gans were camped there. Four Sioux were discovered in a thicket,
●532 were surrounded, and would have been killed but for Big Nose. He
212 took to the brush, but his squaw *Ksískstukyake* ("Bear Woman")
[361] caught hold of him and tried to pull him away. He put her to one
side and went into the thicket, crawling slowly toward the Sioux
until he could see them behind a breastwork they had made in a cir-
cular opening in the thicket. Three were armed with Winchester
rifles, two belts of cartridges, with their knives lying in front of them.
657 The fourth had an old flintlock gun. Big Nose parleyed with the
728 Sioux, telling them the Great Father[A] wanted all the Indians to make
532 peace. He displayed the medal already referred to[B] and a pipe he had
212 with him, asking them to smoke, to come with him, and he would
feed them and send them safely home. They threatened to kill him,
even poking their guns in his face; he paid no attention to this but
[201] continued to ask them to smoke. After making signs that they would
727 not be hurt, he could see that their leader was weakening. Big Nose
then sprang inside the breastwork and grabbed him; Big Nose's
657 squaw grabbed another and then they all came out, the Piegans not
532 injuring them. They then turned the Sioux over to the commanding
212 officer at Fort Walsh, Northwest Territory.

He first sent word by an Indian, now called "Jack the Ripper," to the commanding officer that they had the Sioux prisoners, but he would not believe it until Jack made oath of it. The commanding officer then sent seven soldiers and one officer and four extra horses to get them. When the officer came he was still incredulous; but when shown the pit, which was deep, and the protection afforded by the heavy fringe of thorn bush, he was amazed at the conduct of Big Nose, and made notes and a sketch of the place.

SCENE 14:

532 Four bows and quivers, tomahawk, powder horn and bullet
212 pouch. These were coups and were taken by Big Nose in his different
727 battles.

[555] A,[i.e., the U.S. president--Analyst]

B,[The medal given to him by the U.S. president. See Category 657, p. 264--Analyst]

SCENE 15 (1863):

North Cypress Hills, on the Elbow River, Northwest Territory. 532
A large war party of Piegans were on the march when they came 212
upon four Sioux, in thick timber, who had dug a pit in which they 726
were well protected. The Piegans surrounded and fought them all 721
one day, losing four killed and seventeen wounded. The tree shown [727]
as leaning over the Sioux was a large one up which Big Nose finally climbed, his squaw trying to pull him back. Armed with a double-barreled shotgun loaded with bullets, he killed all four Sioux; although they had been many times shot at, they had earlier been saved by the large limbs of the tree.

SCENE 16 (1854):

In the Snake country. A party of 124 Piegans encountered a lodge of Snake Indians—father, mother, and two grown sons. The gun shown was owned by one of the sons. The three men were killed,
the woman being spared. The Piegans then returned to their own [484]
country without further incident of note; this took thirty-six days, as they were not mounted.

SCENE 17 (1858):

On the Milk River, in Montana, where Chinook is now situated.
The Piegan camp there consisted of five hundred lodges. Nearly as [361]
many Assiniboines and Crows were camped about twenty miles
away. Fighting began about midway between the camps at about [727]
nine in the morning, ending in defeat of the Crows and Assiniboines, who had seven killed and ten wounded, the Piegans losing one killed. The two horses shown were captured, one being wounded in the neck. The rider of the black horse, when dismounted by the wounding of the horse, escaped into the brush. Big Nose ran up, and the horse got away. Sitting Woman, a noted Crow chief, rode the black horse and disgraced himself by hiding in the brush. During the next charge Big Nose captured the other horse. The sorrel horse, being very fat, broke down and was captured, his rider getting on behind another Indian, thus making his escape.

SCENE 18 (1856):

● 532 212 At a point where Great Falls, Montana, now stands on the Missouri River where it comes out of the mountains. A war party traveling at the time discovered a band of elk and thought to kill some meat. The elk ran into a large clump of timber, Big Nose following. While trying to sneak up on the elk, a bear surprised him by charging. The bear was almost upon him when the fatal shot was fired.

SCENE 19 (1845):

On the Missouri River, south of where Helena, Montana, now stands. A war party of Piegans were going into the Snake country, twelve in number. Traveling along, they saw elk in the edge of the timber. Big Nose, being a good shot, went after them to get some meat. The brush was thick, and the bear was almost upon Big Nose when it stopped. He shot the bear, being so close the animal was powder burned.

SCENE 20:

[727] Scalps taken by Big Nose. Some, however, were killed by others—the first to take has the honor.

SCENE 21:

Four Indians killed not shown in other scenes: two Sioux, one Snake, and one Pondera.

SCENE 22:

Battles. Big Nose had been in thirty-six battles, not all shown. He had killed eleven (?) Indians in all, being himself wounded nine times—six by gunshot, and three times by being struck over the head with a gun.

lodge for Sun that summer. When it was completed the people came 776
with their most loved belongings to sacrifice them to Him Above. 782
Praying him for his pity, his help, asking him to give them long and
full life, they made their offerings, and the Sun priest tied them to
the center post of the great lodge. Myself, I gave my real-bear skin.
My mother had softly tanned it, and on its flesh side I had painted a [532] ●
picture of myself shooting the real-bear as it came leaping toward
me. As I entered the sacred lodge and handed the robe to Red Eagle
for him to attach to the center post, I felt grateful to Sun for all that
he had done for me. Earnestly I prayed him for long and full life for
my family, for all the Pikunis, and for myself.

The sacred ceremonies ended, again the bands of our tribe separated, [221]
going one way and another to pass the summer. Our Heavy [361]
Runner band departed to cross Big (Missouri) River and camp and
hunt here and there along Yellow (Judith) River.

All of our bands kept in frequent communication with one another 177
and so in time we got some bad news. It was that Mountain Chief's
band had gone to Many-Houses (Fort Benton) to trade, and there
some drunken white men—Grouse, Night Watcher (Henry Kennerly),
Real White Man (Peter Lukins), and others—had, without
cause for it, hanged Heavy-Charging-in-the-Brush and had shot and
killed Bear Child and Rock-Old-Man, three prominent members of
the band. That made us feel very sad, very angry. We decided to
trade no more at Many-Houses.

It was not long after the murder of our three men at Many-Houses 175
that visitors brought us more news: Owl Child, leading a few of his
friends, had gone up to Wolf-Also-Jumped Creek and had himself
killed Four Bears. I was present when Heavy Runner and other
leading ones of our band got together to talk about it. They agreed
that Owl Child had been justified in killing him. Much as I hated Owl
Child for killing my father, I had to admit that he had had good right
to kill this fire-hearted, quarrelsome, white man. Four Bears had tried
to steal his woman; and failing in that, had struck him, beaten him.
In no other way could Owl Child have wiped out that terrible disgrace.
Well, that was naught to me. I was not forgetting my vow: 000
the time was coming when I would make Owl Child cry for what he
had done to me and mine.

276

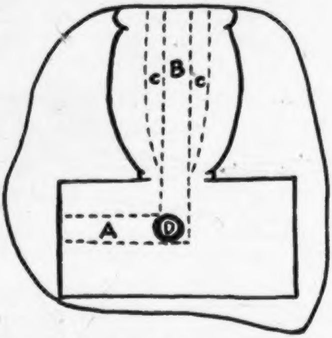


FIGURE 9.—Green-Grass-Bull's pipe-drilling procedures.

tion of the bowl and stem holes to prevent tobacco from filtering through to the stem.

[824] After he drilled the holes, Green-Grass-Bull finished the pipe by more filing and finally by smoothing the surface with dried "jointed water grass" (*Equisetum arvense*, the common horsetail). He used this abrasive plant material by the handful. When one handful was worn out, he employed another, and then another until the entire surface of the stone pipe bowl was completely smooth.[7]

Green-Grass-Bull then proceeded to blacken the surface of his newly
[824] shaped pipe bowl. He dug a hole in the ground about 4 or 5 inches
[372] deep and 5 inches in diameter, then burned sage in it. He greased
[237] the surface of the pipe bowl with tallow, inserted a long stick in the
stem hole, and held the bowl over the burning sage. He was careful not to let the stone become too hot or it might crack. After the surface of the stone became blackened, Green-Grass-Bull rubbed it with his hand until it "shined like a Crow's nose."

Green-Grass-Bull said that a new stone pipe should be broken in carefully. "Don't pull too hard on it, or it will crack. But after the stone gets hard you can smoke it as hard as you want."

[171] In plate 25, *a*, Green-Grass-Bull is shown holding a shaped but yet
unblackened pipe bowl of the typical Blackfoot Modified Micmac
form.A He did not make this pipe bowl, but he said that he usually
[532] made bowls of this form. Nevertheless, Green-Grass-Bull was es-
[028]

---

[7] In August 1947, my interpreter, Reuben Black Boy, and I made a test of this material. Reuben first filed a block of pipestone from the Running Crane quarry. Then we took turns rubbing the file marks with dried *Equisetum*. After an extended period of rubbing with quantities of this plant material the file marks completely disappeared. However, commercial sandpaper would have done the job in a much shorter time.

A./For plate 25,a, see Category 276, p.60-F
--Analyst/

pecially proud of the fact he had once carved a bowl in the form 276 of a bird's head which he had traded to a fellow Piegan, Brockey, [532] for a steer. Green-Grass-Bull understood that Brockey later gave this bowl to George Bird Grinnell, a well-known student of Blackfoot Indian culture at the turn of the century.

RUNNING CRANE AND HIS CHILDREN, PIEGANS

The most prominent Piegan pipemaker of the last quarter of the 19th century was Running Crane, Chief of the Lone Eater's Band, who died July 14, 1902, aged about 76 years. A pipe bowl owned by him in 1891 is pictured in plate 21, *a*. Running Crane was said [435] to have sold his pipes for as much as $20 each and to have traded a pipe for "a good horse."

Running Crane's daughter, Deathly-Woman-Cree-Medicine (born [115] ca. 1868), was the only woman living on the Blackfeet Reservation in [562] the decade of the 1940's who had made pipes. She told me that she had [868] learned the craft by watching her father and her mother, Crane-Old-Woman (who also was a pipemaker), at work. She followed their example in using stone from the Running Crane quarry site for her pipe bowls. She followed her father's example in employing a sharpened piece of hoop-iron to drill the bowl and stem holes, in shaping the exterior of the bowl with a file and removing the file marks with sandrock. Mrs. Cree Medicine preferred a sage fire for blackening [824] the surface of a pipe bowl. She also greased the bowl before placing it over the smoke of the fire. She knew that other pipemakers used a buckbrush fire for blackening pipe bowls, but she thought buckbrush made too hot a fire and might crack the stone.

Plate 23, *b*, is a field photograph of Mrs. Cree Medicine smoking a small elbow pipe of her own making. She told me that she had also [171] fashioned pipe bowls of the Modified Micmac form, and had carved an [532] effigy pipe in the form of a man's head.

Wades-in-the-Water (born ca. 1871), a son of Running Crane, and [115] himself for many years Chief of the Indian Police of the Blackfeet Reservation, told me that he also had made pipe bowls from stone quarried at the Running Crane site. He also preferred a sage fire for [824] blackening pipe bowls. After the smoke-blackened bowl cooled, he polished the surface with a piece of buckskin or cloth.

MIKE DAY RIDER, PIEGAN

A fourth member of the oldest generation living on the Blackfeet [115] Reservation in the 1940's who had made pipe bowls was Mike Day Rider (born ca. 1868). Mike told me that he blackened his pipe bowls

291 frequently went into action entirely naked. The dress of
the Blackfeet was very decent at all seasons, the body being
entirely covered, the women being as sensitive to any ex-
[855] posure of the person as their white sisters. Little children,
however, were sometimes allowed to run naked, though the
girls were usually clothed as soon as they began to walk.
[439] When cotton and woolen stuffs were introduced by the
[178] traders the men took to their use quite readily, but the
[177] women were more conservative and it was long before they
learned to substitute cotton or woolen for their former skin
gown.

DYE COLORS

294 The colors used in dyeing the porcupine quills, horsehair
531 and feathers employed as trimming were red, yellow and
[237] black. The red was obtained from the bull berry, the yel-
[386] low from the root of a plant, and the black apparently from
[824] pulverized lignite, of which they had an abundance in their
[823] country. These colors were prepared for use as a paint by
[381] mixing with glue obtained from the hoofs of the buffalo.
With this compound they often lavishly ornamented buf-
[532] falo robes, saddles, bags, lodges and shields with nude
[439] figures of people and animals. Other colors were intro-
[177] duced by the traders and readily adopted.

HEAD COVERING

292 Neither men nor women ordinarily wore any covering
294 on the head. For special occasions, however, the men were
237 provided with war bonnets of elaborate workmanship. This
[291] consisted of a cap of buffalo hide, usually supporting a
[714] pair of horns jutting out from the sides in imitation of the
buffalo, ornamented with feathers, porcupine quills, strips
of ermine, horse hair, and frequently a long streamer hang-
ing down behind reaching often nearly to the feet. The
feathers were arranged in a row around the head, and,
meeting behind, followed the streamer down the back,
[435] standing out like the teeth of a saw. The only feathers
used were those of the American eagle, which were scarce
and valuable; they were not dyed, but were often tipped
with red horse hair streamers. The best war bonnets were very gaudy, often
handsome, and were esteemed in value equal to a horse.

37: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1944) 1972 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

A UNIQUE PICTORIAL INTERPRETATION OF BLACKFOOT INDIAN RELIGION IN 1846-1847

by

John C. Ewers
Smithsonian Institution

ABSTRACT

Sometime in 1846 or 1847 a Blackfoot Indian artist painted for Father Nicolas Point, S.J., an unsigned watercolor depicting various aspects of Blackfoot Indian religious beliefs. The details of this painting are interpreted here for the first time.

In 1846-1847 Father Nicolas Point, S.J., was the first Christian missionary to 177
spend a winter among the warlike Blackfoot Indians on the plains of present-day 797
Montana. Making his headquarters at the American Fur Company's trading post of Fort Lewis, on the Missouri River near the mouth of the Marias, he extended his labors to the hunting camps of the Indians.

Point's own account of his experiences among the Blackfoot was published 175
one hundred and twenty years later under the title, *Wilderness Kingdom, The Journals & Paintings of Father Nicolas Point*, edited by another member of the Jesuit order, Father Joseph P. Donnelly. The text is handsomely illustrated in full color with reproductions of numerous small portraits of Indians and scenes in Indian life executed by Father Point himself, in addition to a few paintings made for him by Indians. The latter are of particular interest because they are [532]
the earliest known examples of Blackfoot Indian painting in the white man's medium of watercolor on paper.

Despite the fact that Point was preceded among the Blackfoot by two more talented artists, George Catlin (in 1832), and Karl Bodmer (in 1833), he was the first white artist to portray a number of significant aspects of traditional

175 Blackfoot culture. Among these were winter sports of children – whipping tops on ice and sliding down hill on small sleds with runners fashioned of buffalo rib bones; young men playing the hoop-and-pole game; horse racing; use of the horse travois in moving camp and as a step-ladder for pinning the upper portion of a lodge cover during the erection of a tipi; transporting the medicine-pipe on horseback; ceremonial self-torture; antelope, wolf, and eagle trapping; a conical timbered lodge such as was constructed by small horse raiding parties enroute to the enemy camps; and a woman warrior in action (Point 1967: 65, 66, 68, 122, 134, 135, 146, 149, 153, 156).

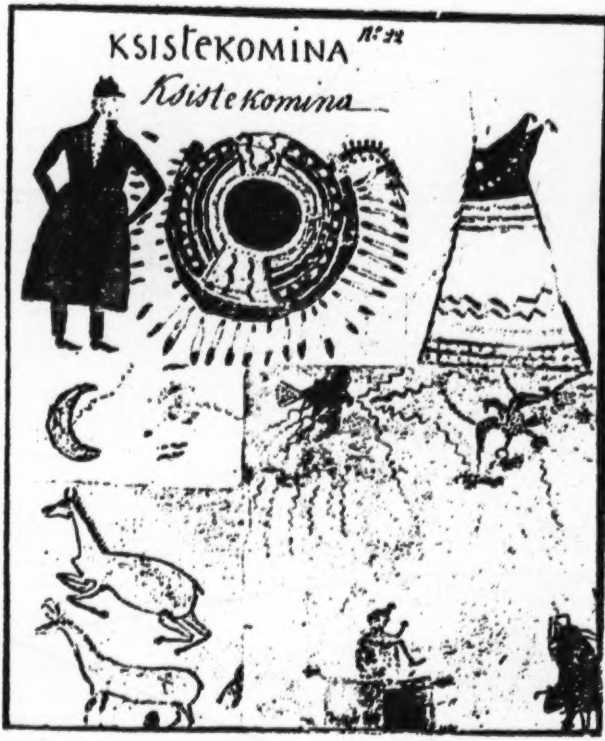
Father Point was also the first artist to portray many of the roles played by men within the tribal culture. One series of his paintings may be a revelation to students who have believed that "culture and personality" studies were initiated during the twentieth century. They include such character studies as "a man of importance" (proudly arrayed in his colorful, decorated "chief's coat" acquired from white traders); "a medicine man" (painstakingly performing a religious ritual); "a warrior" (probably a horse raider, gun in hand, knife at his waist, and pack on his back); "a young dandy" (liberally applying paint to his face while looking into a mirror): "a story teller" (gesturing with his hands); "a flatterer" (obsequiously rubbing the sleeve of the missionary's garment); "a visitor" (smoking his host's tobacco); "a beggar" (elderly man humbly seeking charity); and "a trader who earns his living by barter" (surrounded by the items he values – a horse, feather bonnet, and fine weapons) (Point 1967: 183, 186-87, 190-91, 195).

There can be little doubt that Father Point's paintings are a substantial contribution toward our better understanding of Blackfoot life and culture of a
121 century and a quarter ago. To my mind, however, the single plate in this
● 532 remarkable book that is of greatest ethnohistorical significance is the work of an unnamed Indian artist, simply titled "No. 10 Religion, et Superstition," and reproduced in full color on page 113. The editor did not attempt to explain this illustration. Yet I have found that historians and ethnologists who have seen this plate do not appear to be aware of its historic and cultural importance. I reproduce it here (in black-and-white), and offer the following explanation:[1]

532 This is an unique graphic representation of Blackfoot Indian religion at the time Father Point labored among them in 1846-1847. The man at the upper left must be Father Point himself, the first Christian missionary to the Blackfoot Indians on the Missouri. The word both printed and written on the right of this
[212] figure -- "ksistokomina" – presumably was inscribed by the missionary. It is doubtful whether any Blackfoot Indian of that time possessed a knowledge of both printing and writing. This native term translates "Thunder Chief."

797 Thunder Chief must have been the name the Blackfoot gave to Father Point.
177 In a letter to Father Pierre Jean de Smet describing the progress of his work among the Blackfoot, Father Point indicated that these Indians looked upon him and his new religion much as they had regarded their own medicine men. They believed that he had the power to cause or to cure illness, and that baptism was

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 234]


KSISTEKOMINA
Nº 22
Ksistekomina

532
797
714
778
342
224
821
796

797 not only equivalent to the native sweat lodge, but "that when they had received
177 baptism they can conquer any enemy whatsoever." Furthermore, they believed
he could "cause the thunder to roll" when he was not satisfied. Apparently it
was this last power, which they attributed to him, that won Father Point his
Blackfoot name of "Thunder Chief."[2]

532 All of the other pictures on this plate refer to aspects of the Indians'
traditional religious beliefs – beliefs they had held long before Father Point
appeared among them.

532 The picture at the lower right contrasts most sharply with the Indians'
773 recognition of Father Point as the new Thunder Chief. It depicts the traditional
[776] thunder ceremony of the Blackfoot – the medicine-pipe ceremony, performed
[778] each spring after the first thunder was heard. As early as 1809 the British fur
trader, Alexander Henry, had observed, "Thunder is a man who was very wicked
[821] and troublesome to the Indians, killing men and beasts in great numbers. But
[175] many years ago he made peace with the Blackfeet, and gave them a pipestem in
token of his friendship, since which period he has become harmless" (Henry
1897: II: 366). A well-known tribal myth, recorded by Clark Wissler and David
Duvall (1908: 89-90) more than a half-century ago, tells of Thunder's gift of the
medicine-pipe to the Blackfoot, along with instructions for the performance of
the ceremony in his honor.

The two thunderbirds pictured at the top of this scene were believed to cause
793 thunder and lightning by the flapping of their huge wings. The perspective in the
532 lower portion of this scene is deceptive. Actually the medicine-pipe man is
intended to be sitting in front of rather than on top of the dry-painting altar
[796] which was specially made for use during the ceremony. He wears the distinctive,
[292] club-like headdress of a Blackfoot medicine-pipe man. The German scientist,
[175] Maximilian, Prince of Wied-Neuwied, while he was among the Blackfoot at Fort
[302] Mc Kenzie during the late summer of 1833 observed that the medicine men
"divide [their hair] into several thick queues all around, and generally bind them
altogether with a leather strap, in a thick knot over the forehead" (Thwaites
1904-1907: XXI: 99-100).

796 The altar for the Blackfoot medicine-pipe ceremony was of dry color upon
532 the ground in front of the pipe-owner, the leader in the ritual. One half was red
[237] (at left in the picture), and the other half black (at right). Four feather plumes –
two red and two black – were placed upright at the corners of the altar. These
characteristics of the altar for the medicine-pipe ceremony are correctly depicted
in the artist's scene.

796 The medicine-pipe ceremony and that of the horse medicine cult among the
[123] Blackfoot were closely associated. On the night of March 29, 1943, I witnessed a
horse medicine ceremony conducted by Wallace Night Gun, then leader of that
[178] cult on the Blackfeet Reservation. The altar prepared, used, and destroyed
before the conclusion of that lengthy ceremony was like the one pictured by the
unknown Indian artist in his representation of the medicine-pipe ceremony
nearly a century earlier (Ewers 1955: 265-66, fig. 33). Wissler has described in

detail the complex and prolonged ritual of the Blackfoot medicine-pipe 796
ceremony, based upon his field investigations of more than sixty years ago
(Wissler 1912: 136-165).

At the top center of this plate is pictured an elaborately painted shield. 532
Shields were the major defensive weapons of the Blackfoot. They were 714
commonly carried in large-scale battles, but were not carried by members of 778
small horse raiding parties against the enemy. They were sacred objects. Warriors
placed greater faith in the protective powers of the paintings on their front [231]
surfaces than in the thickness of the buffalo rawhide from which they were
made. These designs originally were given to Indians in dreams or visions by [787]
supernatural powers who took pity upon them. But the shields could be [425]
transferred later from one Indian to another.

Interestingly enough the shield depicted by that unnamed Blackfoot Indian [127]
artist in 1847 bears so close a resemblance to a shield preserved in the collections of the American Museum of Natural History in New York (Cat. No. 50-5760) that it seems probable the artist attempted to picture that same shield. The central figure of the standing buffalo is more realistically rendered on the specimen than in the drawing. But the flanking arcs – painted black with white dots – are very similar. Perhaps the early artist's rendering of this shield is not precisely accurate in every detail, or this specimen may be a remade or repainted version of the shield the artist pictured. Wissler stated that the museum specimen was obtained from a North Blackfoot "who had failed to learn the ritual after its
transfer to him." Wissler also reported that the Blackfoot believed this was one 773
of the three medicine shields referred to in their myth accounting for the origin 714
of shields. According to that myth, an Indian named Always Talking killed his 778
wife for infidelity. The buffalo revived her, and before sending her back to her remorseful husband, gave her her choice of any three shields owned by the buffalo. Wissler first pictured this shield in 1912 (Wissler 1912: 122, fig. 16; Wissler and Duvall 1908: 99-102). Since then it has been illustrated in numerous popular publications on the Plains Indians (see especially Lowie 1954: fig. 62).

The drawing at the upper right may be the earliest known colored illustration 532
of an identified Blackfoot painted tipi. In 1809 Alexander Henry observed that 342
the Blackfoot painted both birds and beasts "in a rude uncouth manner" on the [175]
covers of their tipis. He apparently did not recognize the religious significance of
those paintings (Henry 1897: II: 527).

The unnamed Blackfoot artist portrayed to the best of his ability the snake-painted tipi. Undoubtedly, he pictured what he knew about this tipi rather than what he saw when viewing it from the south side. For there was but one snake painted on each side of the cover. He lets us know that there was a pair of snakes on this tipi by showing both on the same side, one above the other.

The snake-painted tipi was regarded by my Blackfoot informants as one of [773]
the oldest of the tipis of the tribe, because it was said to have been taken from the snakes by the mythological tribal hero, Blood Clot. Wissler and Duvall (1908: 53-58) recorded the Blood Clot myth. Wissler also learned that there

532 were snake-painted tipis among three of the four major divisions of the
342 Blackfoot – the South Piegan (in Montana), and the North Piegan and Blood (in
Canada), while the North Blackfoot had a Big Snake (rattlesnake) tipi. He also
described one of these tipis (Wissler 1912: 220-22, 337-38).

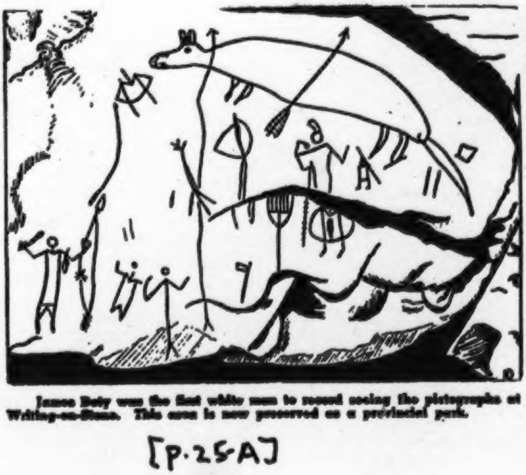
[123] Ninety-five years after the unnamed Blackfoot artist pictured a snake-painted
tipi, I saw one of them, then owned by Yellow Kidney and his wife, in the sun
dance encampment near Browning. The snakes' heads were painted red, and
their bodies were alternating blocks of red and green, zig-zagging around the tipi
cover against a white background – much as they are pictured by the Blackfoot
artist in 1847. The bottom portion of the tipi cover was also painted red with
white discs, and three horizontal red bands were painted at the top of the white
background of the central portion – as in the earlier artist's rendering. The
upper portion (representing the night sky) was painted black, although the small
discs within that area (representing stars) were green on the Yellow Kidney tipi,
[178] whereas they are white in the artist's version of the snake-painted tipi. It is
significant that the design of this painted tipi changed very little over a period of
a century, during which it must have been repainted many times on new lodge
covers of buffalo cow skin and more recently of white cloth, or canvas.

532 The crescent-shaped moon (in black) and circular sun (orange) appearing in
776 the left center of the artist's work must be intended to show that Sun and Moon
were major supernaturals recognized by the Blackfoot. In the tribal mythology
821 Moon is considered to be Sun's wife, and Morning Star was their son. This
[773] relationship is repeatedly referred to in such well-known Blackfoot myths as
[776] Scar Face, and The Fixed Star (or The Woman Who Married a Star) – myths
[778] which account for the origin of the sun dance, and the symbolism of the sacred
digging stick carried by the medicine woman in that most important tribal
religious ceremony (Wissler and Duvall 1908: 58-68). On some of the dry-painting altars employed in Blackfoot ceremonies the moon is represented in
black paint as in the artist's drawing. But on the sun dance altar it is yellow, with
a narrow black center. It is always portrayed as a crescent (Wissler
1912: 254-57).

532 This leaves only the small panel at the bottom left of the plate to be
interpreted. Perhaps the artist chose to picture the pair of antelopes as a further
825 indication of the variety of sources of supernatural power known to the
[776] Blackfoot. The antelope might, of course, have been the artist's own
supernatural helper. The Blackfoot knew the antelope as the swiftest of the
larger mammals on the plains. Antelope power provided a war medicine.
[526] Contenders in the foot races between members of the different men's societies
[575] during the summer sun dance encampments also wanted antelope power to
enhance their swiftness afoot.

178 I was privileged to live among the Blackfoot Indians in Montana for three and
[123] one-half years (1941-1944) nearly a century after Father Point first brought the
teachings of Christianity to those Indians. Blackfoot life and culture had
[777] changed markedly during the intervening years. By the early 1940s less than 20%
[144]

38: Doty G-3 (1855) 1966 NF6 Blackfoot NF6



172
212
532 ●

James Doty was the first white man to record seeing the pictographs at Writing-on-Stone. This area is now preserved as a provincial park.

[P.25-A]

were used for filling in the larger masses. 413
A separate brush was employed for each color.

Articles Painted

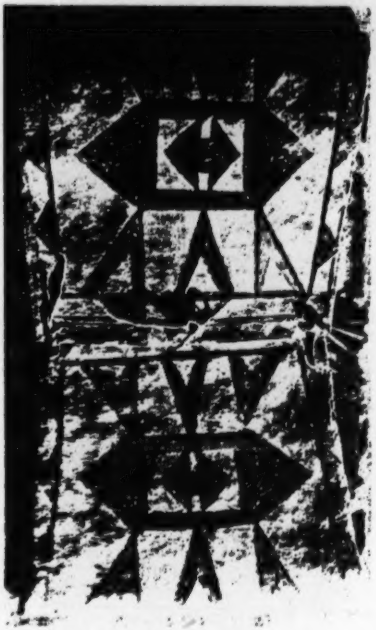
Articles usually decorated with painted 531
designs by the Blackfeet were parfleches (folded, envelope-like, rectangular packing cases, sometimes called "Indian suitcases"), other rectangular folded cases, tubular cases, shields, and drum heads—all of rawhide. Thick rawhide knife sheaths were sometimes painted. Soft skin robes, men's shirts and leggings, lodge linings and lodge covers were often painted. Some objects of wood, such as the tripods supporting the back-rests used inside lodges, arrow shafts, war clubs, and dance paraphernalia also were painted.

Men's Painting and Women's Paintings

531
As a general rule women were the paint- 532 ●
ers of geometric designs on rawhide cases, [555]
robes and lodge linings; men used human [212]
and animal forms and painted the devices on their shields and drums, the religious symbols on their lodge covers, and covered their robes with picture writing extolling their deeds of bravery in war.

[P. 15-B]

531
415



8. Parfleche painted in 1904.

their robes with picture writing extolling their deeds of bravery in war. 000

Rawhide Painting

One of the most common objects painted by women was the parfleche. These most useful storage and carrying cases usually were made in pairs. They were transported on horseback. One parfleche was suspended lengthwise of the horse at each side, by rawhide cords passing through burnt holes in the margins of the cases and over the pommel and cantle of the packsaddle. The contents of these heavy rawhide cases remained dry even when travelling in the hardest rain. 415 [531] [492] [283]

To make a pair of parfleches a woman selected a buffalo hide with the hair on, whose inner side had been fleshed and 281 [531] [532]

[P·16-A]

scraped to an even thickness. She soaked 532
the hide in water and, while it was still [531]
damp, pegged it out on the ground hair side [281]
down. She knelt over the hide on her
knees and began to paint on a portion of it
the design composition she had in mind.
She measured the lengths of the lines out- [824]
lining the desired motives precisely with [413]
peeled willow sticks of different lengths.
Using these sticks as rulers she drew the
outlines of the forms with paint on a bone
brush. Usually a single color was used for
outlining all painted forms on the parfleche.
Then she filled in the larger areas of the
composition with other desired colors. The
paint was mixed only with hot water, which
caused it to sink into the damp hide and
become permanently fixed after it had
dried.

415
531

[P.16-B] 9. Painted parfleche.

Another method of parfleche painting, 532
said to have been favored by Mrs. Little [531]
Spotted Calf, a well known Blackfeet artist
of more than 50 years ago, was somewhat
different. She first outlined the forms with [824]
paint mixed with water, using willow sticks
for straight edges. Then she filled in the
outlined areas with paint, or had young
people do it for her. Meanwhile the tail of [237]
a beaver was boiling in water nearby until
it made a sticky glue. She took another [381]
bone brush with no paint on it, dipped it in [413]
the glue, marked along the painted areas
with it, and finally covered all the painted
masses with a thin coat of the glue. The
glue made the paint shine and remain permanent.
One could pour water over it after
the glue dried and the paint would not run.
The clean second scrapings of hides were [381]
sometimes substituted for the beaver tail in
making the glue overcoat. It is said that [177]
after the Blackfeet obtained rice from the
Whites, they made a sticky glue of it that
furnished another substitute for beaver tail
glue.

In either case, after the paint dried, the 281
hide was turned over and the hair removed
with a hide scraper or a rock. Pounding
the outside of the hide with a rock made
the unpainted portions of the rawhide a
whitish color. Then the woman cut out the
parfleches to the desired shape with a knife,
folded them into their proper envelope form,
and burned out the tie holes with a hot iron
rod. The parfleches were finished.

Areas of the hide not needed for parfleches were not wasted. They were used for making smaller painted cases of rectangular shape, or cut up into moccasin soles.

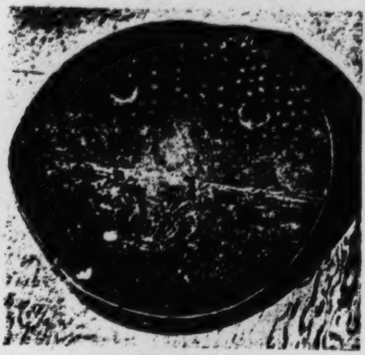
Blackfeet parfleches average 2 feet long 415
by 15 inches wide when folded for use. They
are somewhat shorter than those of most
other Plains tribes. In the old days they
were used primarily for holding pemmican
or dried meat. The painted designs are 531
confined primarily to the two end flaps, sec- 415
ondarily to the longer, narrower, side flaps.
In contrast with some other tribes, such as [171]
the Dakota, Blackfeet parfleches generally

[P.17-A]

The antiquity of parfleches and other 175
painted rawhide containers is in doubt. 415
Descriptions of the Blackfeet written prior
to the fourth decade of the nineteenth century
do not mention them. Yet Maximilian's
account of these people in 1833, mentions
"many kinds of painted parchment bags"
then in use. It is possible that the Blackfeet 415
did not make them at all before they acquired 182
horses, and that prior to that time containers
were of lighter, soft dressed skins, [171]
in the form of drawstring bags, such as were
widely used by the neighboring Plains Cree
in more recent times.

Since the extermination of the buffalo [281]
the Blackfeet have made rawhide cases
after traditional patterns from cowhide.
Because they are so useful for storing small
articles, some parfleches are still in use
among the older Blackfeet.

Men's painting on rawhide was confined 714
primarily to the decoration of shields and [531]
drum heads. Shields were made from the [534]
thick hide of the buffalo bull's neck,
shrunken over a fire in the ground, and
trimmed into a circular form about 13
inches in diameter. The paintings on shields 532 ●
represent the buffalo, the sun, the moon or 821
[P. 19-B] 714



534
531
821
825

14. Painted ceremonial drum.

stars. They were symbolic medicine paintings 532
intended to protect the shield owner in 714
war. An old Blackfeet shield bearing a single
crude painting of a buffalo in red is [821]
shown in figure 13. As was customary, a [237]
fringe of eagle feathers surrounds the rawhide
body of the shield. Symbolic paintings 532
were also made on the heads of drums used
in ceremonials, such as the drum from a 534
medicine pipe bundle bearing the claws of [825]
the thunder bird and dots symbolizing hail [821]
shown in figure 14. Horse and deer hides
were preferred for drum heads. [237]

Painting on Soft Skins

Women also painted geometric patterns 532
on the soft tanned inner surfaces of buffalo 294
robes. Generally the robes were spread out on the ground, hair side down. Some women used one or the other of the two methods of applying the paint to robes explained in our description of parfleche painting, while others employed a third method. The outlines of the painted forms were pressed firmly into the soft surface of the hide with a flattened stick marking tool, drawn along the edge of a willow stick ruler. Then the bone paint brushes were used to paint in the designs with a mixture of paint, water, and glue from the second scrapings of a hide.

At one time Blackfeet women may have 531
painted other geometric patterns on buffalo 294

[P.20-A]

robes, but the only one elderly blackfeet can 531
remember, and the only one common in 294
museum collections, is the pattern the Indians term "marked robe" or "real painted robe." It is a very simple pattern consisting of five or more equally spaced, narrow, parallel lines of decoration running lengthwise of the robe. These lines were usually broken at intervals into rectangular blocks of different colors. Either men or women wore these robes. The pattern was first men- [175]
tioned by Maximilian in 1833. Elkskin robes [178]
bearing this pattern are still worn by Blackfeet medicine women in the annual Sun Dance ceremony. Older Indians say the pattern had no symbolic meaning; it was just a design that appealed to the Blackfeet.

The large, buffalo skin draft screens that 531
lined the lower portions of Blackfeet lodges [353]
were painted with bright geometric designs by women. The painting was confined to a long, narrow horizontal band near the top of the lining, and additional vertical bands projecting downward from it at intervals of about 15 inches. Simple as this pattern was it was distinctly Blackfeet.

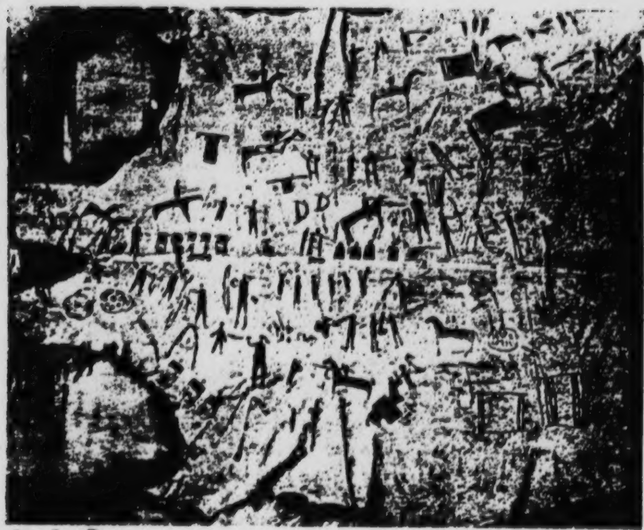
Some men, who had fine war records, pre- 532
ferred to paint pictographic representations 555
of their deeds of valor on their lodge linings. 353

291
294
531

15. "Marked robe" of cowhide.

[P.20-B]

41: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1944) 1945 NF6 Blackfoot NF6



291
555
531
532

[P.22-A]

17. A warrior's robe, painted about 1848-1870

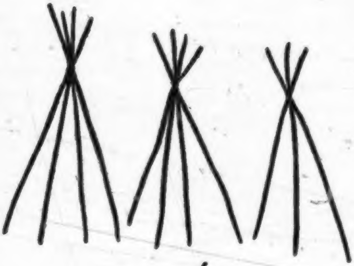
Even though a renowned warrior owned a 532
"marked robe," he preferred to wear a robe 212
on which was pictured his successful en- 291
counters with the enemy and symbolic of his
leadership in war. War history robes were [555]
always painted by men. Either the wearer
decorated his own robe or he secured the
services of a more skillful painter to do it for
him. In painting war history robes, only hot [532]
water was mixed with the paint and the fig-
ures were made freehand with a bone brush.
The figures on Blackfeet robes are generally
more notable for their informative than for
their aesthetic quality. Compared with the [171]
semi-realistic, decorative figures painted by
Cheyenne and Teton Dakota artists during
the latter part of the nineteenth century,
most Blackfeet figures are but crude sug-
gestions of living forms, human or animal.
Some Blackfeet men painted the figures in
outline, others in solid monochrome. The
paintings comprise a series of representa-
tions of events, scattered over the surface
of the robe without any effort to devise an
orderly composition. Blackfeet work is more
properly termed picture writing than art.
However, this simple pictorial shorthand 531
served adequately to tell other Indians, 555
212

18. Some common symbols used in painting war records. 1. Enemy camp (tripods represent lodges). 2. Enemy war party intrenched in a hole. 3. Three methods of representing the taking of a picketed horse from an enemy camp. 4. Horse taken in an open fight. 5. Trade blanket taken from an enemy. 6. Gun taken from an enemy. 7. Bow taken from an enemy. 8. Quiver taken from an enemy. 9. Shield taken from an enemy. 10. Two ways of showing an enemy killed. 11. Enemy's scalp taken. 12. Our hero served as leader of a war party. 13. Hero served as war party scout.

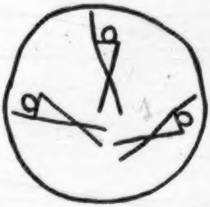
[P.22-B]

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 24-B]

41: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1944) 1945 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

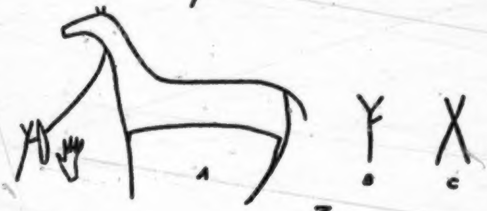


1

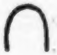


2

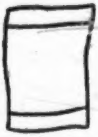
532
212
555



3



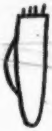
4



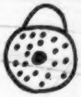
5

6

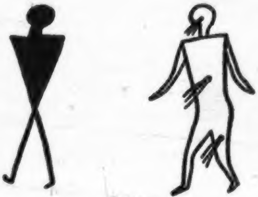
7



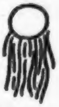
8



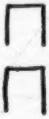
9



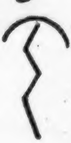
10



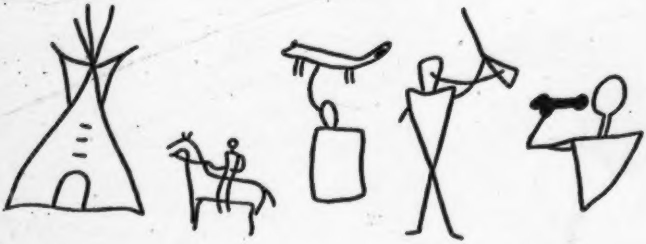
11



12



13



19. Four pictographic signatures. Left to right, Rides at the Door, Weasel Tail, Takes a Gun, and Chewing Black Bone.

[P.24-A]

532 555 212 familiar with the language of the painted figures, exactly what the brave man's claims to distinction were. It indicated, with great economy of line, the number of horses he had stolen from enemy camps on each war party, the number of enemy weapons or other valuable personal equipment he had taken, the number of the enemy he had killed or wounded, the number of times he had served in the responsible position of leader of a war party or as a scout. Some of the common symbols of this pictorial shorthand are shown in figure 18.

532 212 Another valuable symbol was the pictographic signature which served to identify the individual Indian by name. The lone Indian when separated from his war party or his camp could draw his signature, coupled with other pictographs indicating his recent actions, and a small arrow indicating his direction of movement, on a rock, a piece of bone, skin or cloth and leave it in a conspicuous place where others of his tribe might find it and learn of his past accomplishments and future plans. A few pictographic signatures of well known elderly Indians of the Blackfeet Reservation, Montana, are shown in figure 19.

532 531 The most remarkable and awe-inspiring of Blackfeet paintings are the larger than life size murals of animals painted on the conical outer walls of their lodge covers.

[P.24-B)

The painted lodges of the Blackfeet were 532
first mentioned by Alexander Henry, the fur 531
trader, in 1809, who stated that both beasts
and birds were represented in the paintings [175]
and that buffalo and bear were frequently
delineated. Painted, canvas-covered lodges [178]
may still be seen in the circle camp at sun
dance time. Photographs of Blackfeet lodges
taken a half century ago suggest that
little or no change in these figures has taken
place in the last fifty years. It is possible
that some of the animal figures may be represented
today just as they were in Henry's
time or even earlier.

The paintings on Blackfeet lodges are no
mere decorations. To the Indian who is
versed in the traditions of his people, each
painting is as replete with religious symbolism
as is a madonna in a stained glass
church window to the pious Christian. For
each painted lodge there is a fascinating
legend of origin relating how its first human
owner obtained it. Many painted lodges, 787
according to these legends, were given to
their first Blackfeet owners in dreams or 531
visions. Such a dream was a stirring religious 776
experience. In it the original animal
owner of the lodge appeared to the sleeper
and promised to give him his own painted
lodge and other sacred objects which were
the sources of his supernatural power. The
animal instructed the man how to paint the

[P.24-C]

the fall of the year, just after new lodge covers were made. A man first called upon the owner of a lodge and told him of his desire to transfer the decoration to a new cover. The owner in turn called upon someone in the camp who was known to be a skilled artist and asked him to help. When all was in readiness, the new lodge cover erected and stretched into shape around the lodge poles, the painting began. The former owner instructed the artist exactly how to mark out the animal figures on the lodge cover, and the artist proceeded to draw the outline of the forms in black earth paint, using red willowsticks for rulers and a bone paint brush. This outlining was done while the lodge was standing, and the old, worn, painted lodge, which was to be discarded stood nearby where the size and arrangement of its paintings could be referred to if 531 532 [824]

[P. 25-B]

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 26-A]

476
531
532
291

[P 25-c]

28. Painting the cover of the eagle lodge, about 1910.

531
532 ●

21. Eagle painted lodge in 1943.

need be. The outlining of the forms was the only part of lodge painting that required the services of the most able artist obtainable. 532

The new lodge cover was then taken down and spread out flat on the ground. The [574] owner invited a group of people of good reputation for honesty and industry to his lodge and gave them a smoke. They proceeded to help him finish the painting. They [476] [237] used a buffalo tail or a handful of long buffalo hair to apply the paint to the larger masses. The paint was mixed with hot water only, and rubbed onto the cover with considerable pressure. When the painting was finished and the new lodge erected, all the ornaments that hung on the old lodge were transferred to the new one by its owner. Then he invited the owners of other painted [574] lodges in the camp to join him inside his new lodge. There they prayed for the lodge, [782] and finally helped the owner to make a [343] purification sweatlodge outside. The cere-

[P. 26-A]

mony of transferring the sacred symbols from the old to the new lodge cover was then ended. 532

The old, worn, painted cover was disposed of either by taking it to a lake, spreading it out, and weighting it with stones so that it would sink; or by spreading it out on the plains and weighting it with stones. In the first instance the old cover was given as an offering to the water spirits; in the second, it was an offering to the sun. [782] [776]

The great animal figures were generally painted on the central portion of the lodge cover, about midway of the height of the lodge. In cases of the larger mammals such as the deer, elk, and buffalo and in that of the snake lodge, a single pair of animals are painted on the cover. They represent the mythical originator and his wife. In most instances they face the lodge doorway (east), the female on the north side of the lodge and the male on the south. However, on the buffalo lodges the two huge figures appear on the east and west sides. The male buffalo is on the east facing south; the female on the west side facing north. Some of the figures have narrow elongated bodies enabling them to extend nearly halfway around the circumference of the lodge. Each of the two figures on the deer painted lodge, for example, is more than fifteen feet long and less than five feet high. Where smaller mammals are represented, 531 532 [823]

22. Deer painted lodge in 1942.

[P.26-B]

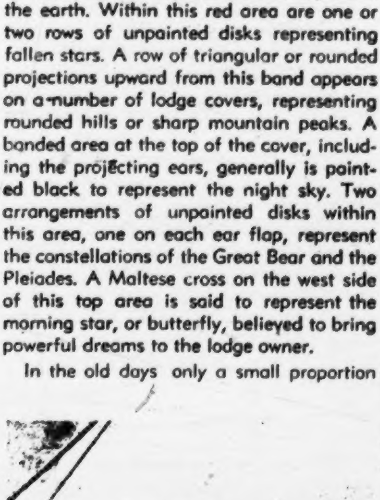
from two to four pairs of them are depicted. 531
The figures face east. 532

These animal figures generally are very stylized and decorative. Usually the body is of one solid color, either black, red or yellow. A characteristic elaborative device on most of them is the representation of the throat, heart and kidneys, which were believed to have been the sources of power of the animals depicted. [776] [825]

Many lodges decorated with animal paintings, and a number of others not so decorated, employ a similar composition of the upper and lower portions of the cover into two fields for geometric painting. At the bottom, a banded area two or more feet in height usually is painted red to represent the earth. Within this red area are one or two rows of unpainted disks representing fallen stars. A row of triangular or rounded projections upward from this band appears on a number of lodge covers, representing rounded hills or sharp mountain peaks. A banded area at the top of the cover, including the projecting ears, generally is painted black to represent the night sky. Two arrangements of unpainted disks within this area, one on each ear flap, represent the constellations of the Great Bear and the Pleiades. A Maltese cross on the west side of this top area is said to represent the morning star, or butterfly, believed to bring powerful dreams to the lodge owner. 821 531 532

In the old days only a small proportion 531 121

531
532



23. Figures on the south side of an otter painted lodge, 1943

[P.27-A]

531
532 ●

24. Yellow buffalo painted lodge in 1942.

of the total number of lodges in a camp 531
were painted, and some of the painted ones 121
employed symbols of power other than animal figures. However, from the point of view of aesthetic interest, the lodges painted with animal figures are outstanding. Their great size, and their simple, primitive, decorative quality command attention and admiration. It is in the painted animal figures on lodge covers that we find the finest expression of Blackfeet religious art. Certainly they represent the highest achievement of traditional Blackfeet painting.

QUILLWORK

The Blackfeet Indians have a beautiful 237
legend explaining how the first porcupines [773]
were given to one of their ancestors by the [776]
powerful Thunder spirit. The same legend [825]
states that Thunder taught this person how
to do quillwork. This is said to have happen-
ed a very long time ago. Certainly porcupine 531
quillwork is one of the Blackfeet decorative
arts that originated before these Indians

[P. 27-B]

RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE OF BLACKFOOT QUILLWORK

Abstract

Quillwork among the Indian tribes of
the Northwest as practised by the 531
women embodied features of religious
significance of a restrictive nature.
Only a few women had the right to do
this work and it was they who gave
permission for others to be initiated
into the religious pattern. The symbolisms,
while varying between tribes,
included specific prayers, face and
hand painting and the wearing of specific
ornaments, such as necklaces,
while quilling. Quill work was done [431]
in return for gifts and the finished
product could not be sold. Designs [425]
could be used only by the owner unless
they were given away.

The religious significance of art forms among 462
the Blackfoot Indians has generally been associated
with the men. Such fields as the painting 532
and transferring of tipi designs, or the painting
of war exploits on buffalo robes or shields were
male responsibilities and were accompanied by
religious ceremonies and taboos.

However, little religious significance has 462
been attached to female crafts. The painting
of parfleche containers, lodge liners, etc., or 531
the beading or ornamenting of clothing for nonreligious
use depended mainly upon the maker's
skill.

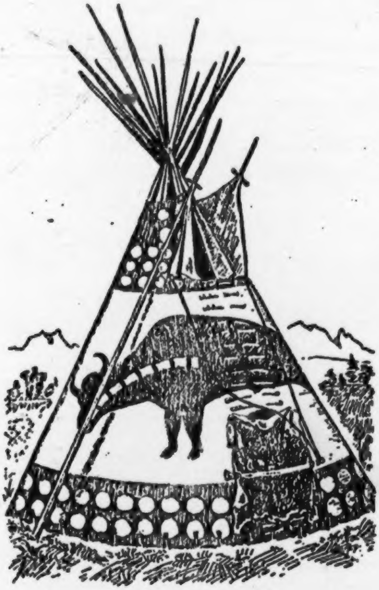
While details of the techniques of Blackfoot 531
quillwork have been recorded, primarily by
Orchard (1916) and Ewers (1945), only passing
attention has been given to the religious significance
of this pre-European craft. The most [778]
detailed comments have been made by Ewers,
who stated it was a "sacred craft" and that
"younger women were initiated ceremonially
into the art of handling the sharp-pointed quills"
(Ewers 1945). Although quillworking is now [178]
almost a forgotten art among the Blackfoot,
there are at least seven persons who have occasionally
done such work in the past decade. Of

Certainly the ordeal required both courage
796 and fortitude, but the Chief says, and he should know, that the
785 event represented the fulfilment of a vow which the participant
had made to the sun on the occasion of his requesting some special
[782] favor, such as protection in war or the recovery from illness of a
loved one. Of special interest is the fact that if the skewers did not
tear loose after a reasonable term of sincere effort by the dancer, it
was the prerogative of any respected warrior to step forth, recite
his war honors by way of qualification, and sever with a knife the
strips of flesh which bound the dancer to the thongs; whereupon
the severed flesh was given as an offering to the sun. Such a brutal
religious gesture!—almost as nutty as having yourself lashed and
wearing a hair shirt over the open wounds. Those who fast at the
[178] Sun Dance for four days take no refreshment except a small drink of
water at sunrise and sunset, and since some of the old ladies and
gentlemen are too frail to survive such an ordeal, it is now allowable
for a surrogate faster to deny himself in their stead. There is nothing
supposititious about this action; it is intended by the surrogate as a
gesture of respect to the worthy old-timers and is done in the same
spirit that the cutting of the flesh of the dancer formerly was conducted.

342 The Chief mentioned something about the Indian teepee or lodge
178 which came as a surprise to me but which I should have had sense
enough to know without being told. The old buffalo hide teepees
were much smaller than their modern canvas counterparts. Hide
weighs much more than canvas, and even though the Blackfoots
used the lighter summer hides of the buffalo, or even split the hide
to reduce its bulk, a teepee constructed of more than six or eight
hides was simply too heavy for the nomadic Blackfoots to con-
[492] veniently pack around. Some wealthy families, who had many horses
and so could provide travois transportation for more worldly goods,
had larger teepees, but these had to be divided into two or more
parts because a single horse could not manage to pull the load.

342 The discussion moved on to the Blackfoot painted lodges, and
● 532 here we really struck paydirt. Even in the old days there were only
about four dozen painted lodges among all three tribes of the Black-
[619] foot Confederacy, and the lodges were not painted helter-skelter or
at the whim of the owner. The painted lodge was associated with a
[778] medicine bundle of some sort, and the designs painted on the lodges
[787] were either inspired by a vision that the owner had had or were
[432] purchased (the exclusive privilege of using the design, that is)
[424] from the previous owner. The Chief related the traditional origin of

the design painted upon the Buffalo Lodges that he and Jim own, and also the origin of the Eagle Lodge. 342 532



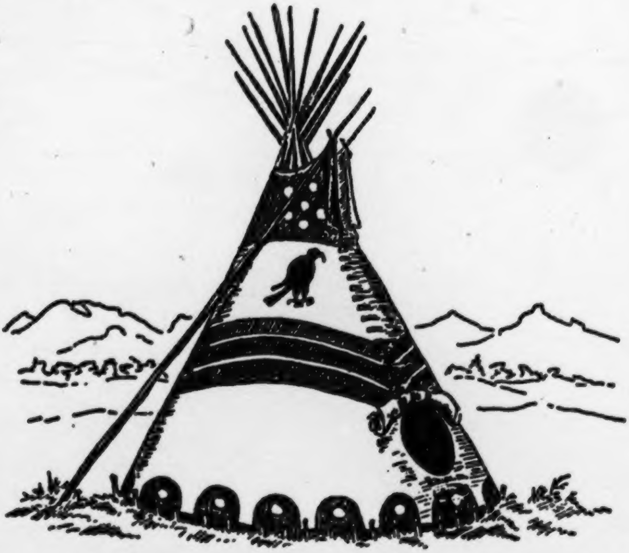
THE TWO BUFFALO LODGES

This happened a long time ago, up in Canada, near a place on the Bull River known as Blackfoot Crossing. Two Blackfoot men, one named Holy Man and the other named Weasel Heart, were seated on a bluff above the river. The two men were partners, and they were making arrows. 342 532 539

In the river below the place where the two partners were sitting was a green hole [a deep place in the river, where the water is unusually clear] and suddenly Holy Man turned to his partner, Weasel Heart, and said, "I think I see a lodge down there in that green hole. I am going to go down and see what kind of lodge it is, and what it is doing there in the river." So Holy Man floated down the river on a log, and when he came to the green hole he dived to the bottom of the river. He stayed

342 under the water for such a long time that Weasel Heart began
● 532 to think that he might have drowned, but finally he came up
again and said, "I have a painted buffalo lodge down there."
539 Weasel Heart said, "I think I see another lodge down there." So he dived down into the green hole, and when he came up again he said, "I have a buffalo lodge down there too."

342 One of the buffalo lodges is a black lodge and the other is a
532 yellow lodge. Today, the black buffalo lodge belongs to me,
and the yellow buffalo lodge belongs to your brother, Jim.
[432] When I purchased the black buffalo lodge, many years ago, I
[424] paid for it five race horses, four beeves, many blankets and
other trade goods, and also some money.



THE EAGLE LODGE

237 In the early days, the Blackfoots used eagle feathers in making their warbonnets and in decorating their shields and their
223 lances and many other things. Sometimes they would capture grown eagles by digging a pit and covering the pit with branches and placing some meat on top of the branches as

bait; then they would hide in the pit, and when an eagle came down to grab the bait with his claws, they would capture the eagle by grabbing its feet. At other times they would capture young eagles right from the nest, and these they would hold in captivity until they were fully grown and could provide large tailfeathers for their owners. 223 [231]

Eagles nest high up on the cliffs, and the way the Blackfoots captured the young eagles was to go to the top of the cliff and lower somebody down to the nest with a rawhide rope. But it was necessary to wait until the young eagles had reached a certain size, otherwise the eagles would die in captivity, so when a Blackfoot man had discovered an eagle nest he would keep watch on it until just the right time, and then he would have his partner lower him down to the nest at a time when the parent eagles were away hunting food. [231]

One time, many years ago, two brothers had discovered an eagle nest, and the elder brother lowered the younger brother down to the nest to see whether the young eagles were old enough for capture. This happened a long time ago, and the name of the elder brother is not remembered by the Blackfoots, but the name of the younger brother was Young Bull. The elder brother was jealous of Young Bull because he thought that he had been playing around with his young wife. This was not true, but the elder brother was so jealous that when Young Bull had reached the eagle nest he pulled up the rope and left him there to die. Young Bull cried and pleaded for his brother to pull him up, but the elder brother would not listen. The brother went back to the Blackfoot camp, which was across the river from the eagle nest, and told the people that Young Bull had been killed by a bear, and pretty soon, from his place up in the nest, Young Bull saw the people breaking camp and moving away. 539 342 532

Soon after that, the parent eagles returned to their nest, and when they found Young Bull there they attacked him and slashed him with their claws. But when the parent eagles discovered that Young Bull was not fighting them but was just sitting quietly with the young eagles held in his lap, crying, they calmed down and did not attempt to do Young Bull any further harm.

So the eagles accepted Young Bull as a friend, and Young Bull lived in the nest with the eagles and helped to care for the young eagles, and he protected the young ones while the parent

539 eagles were away hunting for food. At first Young Bull lived on
342 the scraps left over from the food which the parent eagles fed
to their young; then one day the parent eagles brought Young
532 Bull a buffalo calf, and with a flint knife he butchered the calf and ate the kidney and the liver raw and then from the rest of the calf he made dry meat. From the hide he made a robe with which to keep warm.

Young Bull lived with the eagles all summer, until the young eagles were big enough to fly. Then one day the eagles left Young Bull a young goat for food, and all four of them flew away. The eagles stayed away for two days, and Young Bull thought that they had deserted him, but finally they came back with a turtle for him to eat. Several times the eagles flew away, and each time Young Bull thought that they had deserted him, but always the eagles returned.

Then one day, when the eagles had flown away once again, Young Bull fell asleep with the first fall of night and he had a dream. In his dream, Young Bull was sitting in a lodge, and the father eagle entered the lodge in the form of a man and spoke to Young Bull: "Do not worry, Young Bull. You will be returned safely to your people. Furthermore, you shall have revenge upon your brother, who left you alone to die. Your brother will suffer as you have suffered."

The eagles did not return the next day, and that night Young Bull once again dreamed that he was in a lodge. It was the same lodge that he had dreamed of being in the night before, a lodge with eagles painted on the outside. This time the mother eagle entered the lodge in the form of a woman and spoke to Young Bull: "Young Bull, you have helped me to raise my babies, and for this I am grateful. As soon as my babies are able to carry a heavy load, they will help their father and me to carry you down from the nest where you are now asleep."

On the following day the eagles returned, bringing with them two fawns which they split open with their beaks and gave to Young Bull for food. Then the eagles left again, and this time they stayed away for four nights and did not return until the fifth day. At first Young Bull thought that he had been deserted by his eagle friends, but on the fourth night he had another dream. Once again he dreamed that he was in the eagle lodge, and in his dream the four eagles entered his lodge in the form of a man and a woman and two boys that were nearly grown into men. The eagle persons spoke to Young Bull and told him

that on the following day they would return to take him home, 539
and that the nest in which he had lived so long would be 342
changed into a lodge with an eagle painted on each side. They 532
told him that when they returned the next day they would bring four stones, and they showed him the ceremony he must perform with the four stones. Then the eagle persons told Young Bull that he must prepare for their return by taking his flint knife and cutting his buffalo calf robe into four pieces and braiding each of the four pieces into a strong rope. They told him exactly how he was to use the four braided ropes, and then they left.

On the following afternoon, the four eagles returned to the nest, each of them carrying a stone. Young Bull had prepared the four braided ropes and had tied the ends of the ropes to his wrists and to his legs just above the knees, and now he tied the other ends of the ropes to the four stones. Then each of the eagles grasped a stone in its claws, and among the four of them they carried Young Bull down from the nest. The load was a heavy one for four eagles to carry, and they were just barely able to make it to the opposite shore of the river. The eagles were very tired, but Young Bull was safe and unharmed.

So Young Bull said good-bye to his eagle friends and started out to search for his brother. Pretty soon he met a Blackfoot man who was out hunting for horses, and the man said, "Yes, your brother is at our camp, not far from here, but he thinks that you are dead. He thinks that you were killed by a bear."

So Young Bull went to the camp and entered his brother's lodge. His brother was surprised to see him, and right away the brother made a lie: "Young Bull," said the brother, "I am glad to see you alive. I could not pull you up from the eagle nest because a bear chased me away. I thought that the bear must have killed you."

So Young Bull made a lie to his brother in return: "Yes, I was hurt by a bear, but I managed to get away alive." Then he showed the scars from the talons of the eagles and said that they were scars from the claws of a bear. He did not mention the eagles at all.

So Young Bull lived in the lodge of his brother all that winter, but never once did he mention the eagles. Then when it was early summer and the young eagles were hatched in the nests, Young Bull's brother had a dream in which the father eagle appeared to him as a person and told him it was time to go and

539 take the baby eagles away. At the same time, the mother eagle
342 appeared in a dream and told the brother's wife of the wicked
532 thing he had done to his younger brother, Young Bull.

So the three of them, Young Bull and the brother and the brother's wife, went upon the cliff, and Young Bull and the wife lowered the brother down to the eagle nest. Then Young Bull pulled up the rope and said to his brother, "This eagle nest is my lodge, and you can live in it as I did. Live as well as you can, and if you care for the eagle children, perhaps you will live to return to your people the same as I did."

Then Young Bull and the wife returned to the camp, and together they made a lodge to live in, and on each side of the lodge there was an eagle painted in black paint.

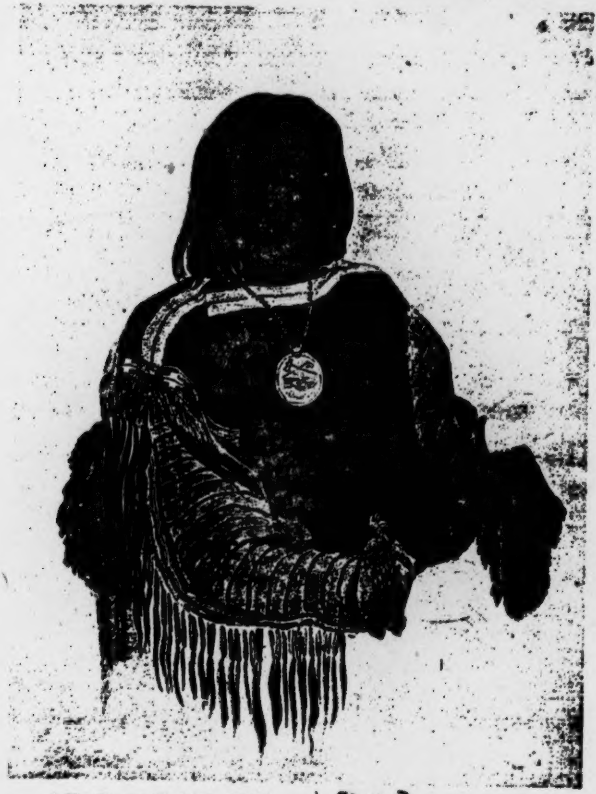
122 I would have gotten some other teepee stories, I am sure, had it not been for the unannounced arrival early in the evening of an extroverted, loquacious Indian in his thirties—"Name by Redhorn," Jim explained. Verily doth Redhorn's tongue wag loudly and oft, and among the informations which forthwith did assail mine ears was the boast that Redhorn had been a technical adviser during the filming of Bud Guthrie's book, *The Big Sky*, which was shot here in Montana.

Redhorn "just happened to stop by," but I am sure that he knew I was here. I attempted unsuccessfully to contact the Chief and Jimmy by telephone and every other modern means when they were up at Gleichen, but the Indian grapevine (known locally as the "moccasin telegraph") informed them of my whereabouts on the day following my arrival.

124 Redhorn, it seems, is both an author, a linguist, and a bibliopole of sorts, and he "just happened to have with him" a printed pamphlet of his own composition.

Below: Stomík-Sosak (the bull's hide), a Blood chief whose son had killed the young *engagé* Martin on August 12, touching off a bloody dispute with Ninoch-Kiaiu and his band of Piegans. Once the Piegans had finally departed, Stomík-Sosak was able to lead his small band of Bloods into the fort for trading on September 4. *Opposite:* An unidentified Piegan warrior who posed in his elaborately painted elkhide robe, wearing his rifle sheath as a headdress. Bows and guns indicate weapons captured, while enemies wounded or slain are symbolized by hourglass figures. The octopuslike black symbols on the lower skirt are scalps. At his shoulder, the triangular yellow and green figures probably represent horsewhips which always accompanied horses presented as gifts. Thus, this combination of whips and weapons most likely details this warrior's generosity. The numerous horse tracks indicate stolen horses. 578 291 532

291
142
301
302



A, [See Category 291, p.137--Analyst]

[P.136]

56: Maximilian N, T-5 (1833) 1976 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Montana

291
301
302
276
532